Meralco to high court: We'll refund for one year only

Story below, Col. 3

GMA going to Bangkok for Asean SARS summit

By Dona Pazzibugan

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo will attend a hastily arranged Asean leaders summit on Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in Bangkok, Thailand, on April 29.

Ms Macapagal has accepted Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Sinawatra's invi-

GMA/ A20

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

DOH vows to enforce RP's quarantine law

By Armand Nocum and Norman Bordadora

HEALTH authorities are preparing to use the full force of the law to quarantine people who are suspected of having SARS or who have been exposed to potential SARS patients.

"We have the quarantine law to re-

DOH/ A18

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph Tuesday, April 22, 2003 ★★★ 60 pages / 4 sections / vol. 18 / no. 133 P15 website: www.inq7.net

RP death probable SARS

Nursing aide got virus in Canada

By Armand Nocum

THE DEPARTMENT of Health yesterday announced the Philippines' "second probable SARS case"—a 46-year-old Filipino woman who died at the San Lazaro Hospital in Manila on April 14 after returning from Toronto via Tokyo earlier this month.

Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit said at a briefing that the ailment of the woman, a nursing attendant, was "reclassified" as probable Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome after "contact tracing" by local and Canadian health officials found that she could have been infected by her roommate's mother, who was in turn infected by the Filipino doctor who died of SARS in Toronto on April 18.

The DOH has ordered quarantine for 200 "casual contacts" and 54 "close contacts" of the woman, Adela Catalon. However, she will not be considered a confirmed SARS case until lab testing in Japan shows her blood sample positive for the carrier coronavirus, Dayrit said.

He also said Catalon was not yet in the contagious stage prior to her confinement at the San Lazaro Hospital. Contagion was in effect only when she came down with fever on April 12 and died of pneumonia two days later.

Nevertheless, Dayrit said all those who had contact with her would be closely observed until April 26. "Local transmission" will be deemed to have set in if any of them comes down with fever, cough or respiratory attacks.

RP DEATH/ A18

HONG KONG: The view is spectacular and so are the numbers of SARS fatalities—six more people dead and 22 others infected. REUTERS

CANADA: A pharmacy does a brisk business selling masks. With 14 dead from SARS and thousands quarantined, Toronto has been the worst hit by the killer disease outside Asia. GETTY IMAGES

CHINA: Where it all began, the question remains if the drastic measures now in place, albeit belatedly, can prevent the epidemic from threatening virtually all of the country's 1.3 billion people. REUTERS

Asia epidemic worsens: 10 more dead in HK, China

HONG KONG—The SARS epidemic in Asia worsened yesterday, with China and Hong Kong reporting 10 more deaths and 154 new cases. China also formally sacked the mayor of Beijing for covering up the extent of the killer disease in the capital.

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), which is fatal in more than 5 percent of cases and has no known cure, has killed 217 people worldwide and has infected about 4,000 in 30 countries.

"The epidemic is severe as fire and the peo-

ASIA/ A19

Dante Ang on warpath vs Villaraza law office

By Carlito Pablo

DANTE Ang, erstwhile chief image-maker of President Macapagal-Arroyo, is on the warpath, an indication of the messy struggle between two power-packed blocs in the administration.

"Yes, I am upset, nay, furious," Ang wrote Sunday in his newspaper, The Manila Times in the second of two articles in one week that railed against the allegorical dog 'Viaje,' named after "viajeng Hapon" or "lagareng Hapon" (someone who has a finger in every pie), and his "kennel."

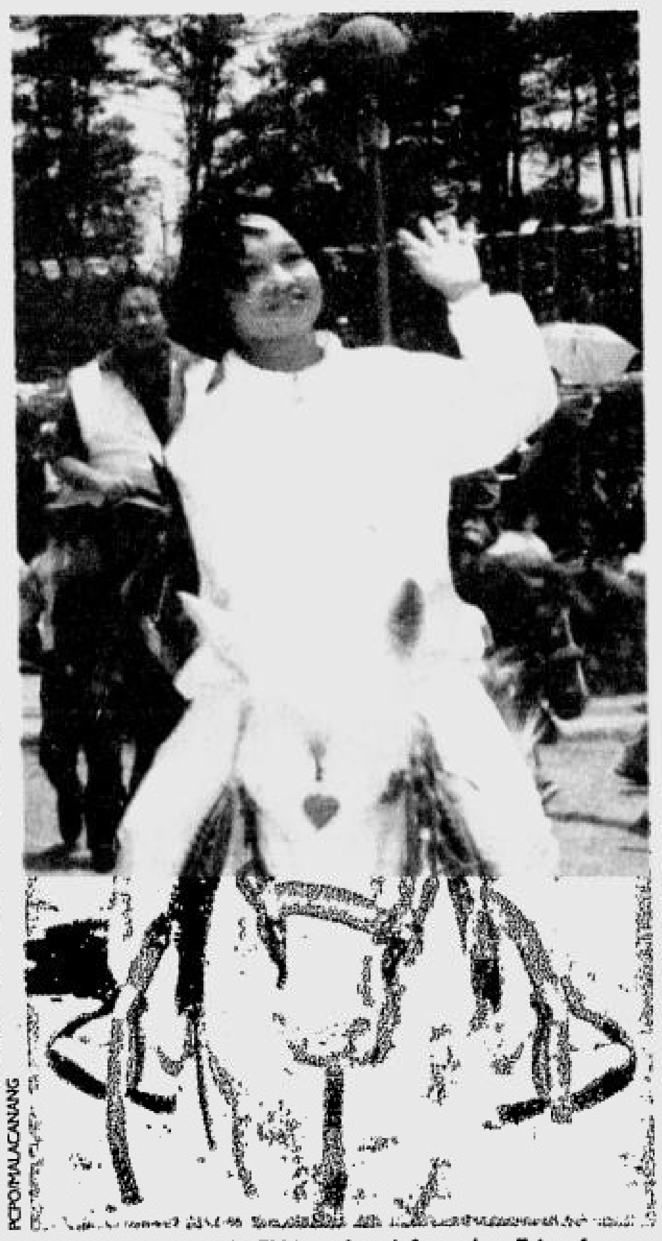
Observers claim that Ang's Viaje is probably lawyer Arthur "Pancho" Villaraza and the kennel, the influential Villaraza, Angangco Law Office, formerly the Carpio, Villaraza and Cruz Law Office, before two of its partners were appointed to key government positions.

The two are Supreme Court Justice Antonio Carpio and Presidential Legal Counsel Avelino Cruz. Another former senior partner Simeon Marcelo was named Ombudsman.

Described in legal circles as

DANTE/ A20

Palace hails US 'pullout' from Baghdad



PCPO/MALACAÑANG

HORSING AROUND. Taking a break from the affairs of state, President Macapagal (with Mr. Mike Arroyo behind her) rides a white horse on Easter Sunday at the Wright Park in Baguio City where the first family spent Holy Week.

By Carlito Pablo and Blanche S. Rivera

THE FIRST country to appoint an ambassador to the new Iraq also became the first country to hail the US "decision" to pull its troops out of Baghdad.

Malacañang yesterday released a "Statement of the President on Iraq" which lauded the US move, saying the pullout "shows the world that the war is not about occupation but liberation."

The latest wire agency reports, however, said US Marines had merely turned over control of the Iraqi capital to incoming US Army units, and that the regular Army was better equipped to handle law and order problems.

It was not clear where or how the Palace got the information that the

PALACE/ A6

President to accompany Pikit evacuees back home

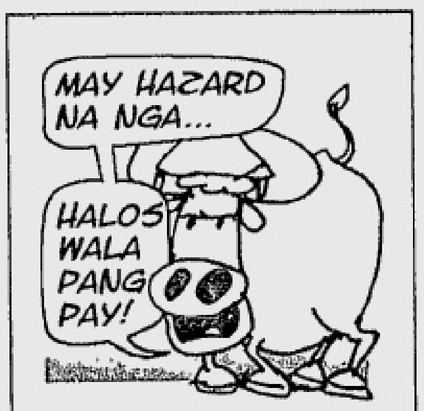
By Dona Pazzibugan

IF all goes according to a last-minute plan, thousands of evacuees who fled the fighting in Pikit, North Cotabato, will return to their homes today with the President herself as their guide.

By one estimate, at least 40,000 villagers had fled their homes. They have been staying in congested evacuation centers and refused to return home for fear of renewed hostilities.

"I would accompany the evacuees in returning to their homes in the Buliok (complex) and nearby barangays," said President Macapagal-Arroyo during a televised teleconference in Pasay City with overseas contract workers in Kuwait yesterday.

PRESIDENT/ A6


MAY HAZARD NA NGA...
HALOS WALA PANG PAY!

$3.50 a day for Iraq volunteers

By TJ Burgonio

IS THIS the coalition of the willing to be underpaid?

The 500 Filipino soldiers and policemen taking part in the humanitarian assistance mission to Iraq will receive an allowance from the US-led coalition amounting to a grand total of $3.50 (about P192) a day.

$3.50/ A20

Meralco tells SC: One year only

MANILA Electric Co. is now willing to refund the excess charges it imposed on its more than three million consumers, but not the full amount.

In a motion filed on Holy Wednesday, lawyers for Meralco asked the Supreme Court to modify its refund order of April 9 to cover just one year instead of the four years in the original ruling.

At the very least, the ruling should be modified so that only actual excess collections between Feb. 1, 1994 and Jan. 31, 1995 are refunded, the country's biggest power distributor said.

Meralco vice president Elpi Cuna said yesterday that the filing of the motion was a last resort for the company, which had warned that it would go bankrupt if it were to refund its customers in full.

"We filed this because the refund has tremendous effects on Meralco," Cuna said in a telephone interview.

Should the high tribunal grant the petition, Meralco will have to refund its customers at least P2.4 billion, the excess charges that the Commission on Audit (COA) had found for that year. The amount will go up if interest payments are included.

The Energy Regulatory Board, the

MERALCO/ A6

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Batanes and Northeastern Cagayan will experience stormy weather while Isabela and the rest of extreme Northern Luzon will have rains and occasional gusty winds. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers.
SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/04/22/03

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Rains	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Rains	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
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Second FrontPage

No local combat for US troops—GMA

By Carlito Pablo

NO AMERICAN soldier will be "on the ground" in the joint military exercises with the US set for later this year in the Abu Sayyaf stronghold of Sulu, President Macapagal-Arroyo said yesterday.

The President made the announcement in a speech before city mayors yesterday as she explained the nature of the US participation in the exercises is focused on "intelligence fusion, humanitarian assistance and quick extrication of wounded soldiers."

Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes, who was at the forum, later sought to clarify his commander in chief's statement fearful that it would create the impression that Balikatan 03-1 would not be a joint exercise.

"No (US) ground troops for combat," Reyes said, explaining that unlike the previous Balikatan 02-1 held in Basilan last year in which two US soldiers were attached to each light company of the Philippine Armed Forces, there will be no such thing in Balikatan 03-1.

"We will have the American soldiers on the ground only for noncombatant operations," he said.

Reyes said this would emphasize that "it will be the Filipino soldiers who should be doing the fighting."

Presidential Spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said US soldiers would instead be asked to provide "real-time information on movements" of Abu Sayyaf extremists.

But he stressed that "if they (the US troops in Sulu) are fired upon, they have the right to self-defense."

Reyes said US and Philippine authorities had yet to decide when Balikatan 03-1 would start. He said the terms of reference would "clearly specify" the role to be played by US soldiers.

The planned joint operations have been hit by intense public criticism and scrutiny because of the constitutional ban on foreign troops engaging in combat in Philippine territory.

Balikatan 03-1 will be the second installment of US assistance in the military campaign against the Abu Sayyaf, alleged by both the US and Philippine governments to be linked to the international terror network of Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden.

In her speech, Ms Macapagal also said that aside from Sulu, the Balikatan 03-1 exercises would be held in other parts of Mindanao, including Zamboanga City, and some parts of Luzon.

Reyes said a combat role for the US troops in areas other than Sulu was being considered, but quickly added: "But if there are no combat elements in Sulu, then there should be no combat elements anywhere else."

The President noted the "importance to our national security of Sulu," where the Abu Sayyaf is still holding hostage two women members of the Jehovah's Witnesses and Roland Ullah, the last of the hostages seized from the Malaysian resort of Sipadan in 2000.

Last weekend, two of the four female Jehovah's Witnesses hostages were able to escape from their Abu Sayyaf captors.

In a statement released yesterday, the President noted the neutralization of the Abu Sayyaf. She said the rescue of the remaining hostages "will come in due time."

"The Abu Sayyaf group is now in disarray as a result of the intensified pursuit and rescue operations of our government," she said. "Once we have decisively cut down these terrorist cells, we will open more avenues for peace and development, which are our ultimate goals."

The President in February gave the military 90 days to finally crush the Abu Sayyaf. *With reports from Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk, and AFP*

US training awes, confuses Filipino soldiers

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Filipino soldiers undergoing training by US troops here pronounced themselves in awe of the huge differences in combat techniques of the two nations' military forces.

"In the (Philippine) Armed Forces, we were taught that in actual combat, only the strong would survive. But the Americans have this thing they call break contact or withdrawal from actual combat," Cpl. Virgilio Yrog-irog said.

Yrog-irog was among 114 soldiers who trained under the Light Infantry Battalion module of the Bayanihan exercises. He "graduated" yesterday.

Yrog-irog said US soldiers taught the trainees how to "fight enemies" with only a small group of soldiers. "This way, we could avoid higher casualties," he said.

Another soldier said, however, that the training they got may not be applicable to the campaign against the Abu Sayyaf and other armed groups in the country.

He said they were trained in urban warfare even though their main quarry is in the jungle.

"I don't think the training I received would be useful when I get back to my base in Basilan," the soldier said.

US officials, however, declared the exercise a success.

Maj. Mike Lackman, deputy of the Joint Special Task Force Operation Philippines, said the trainees were highly motivated. *Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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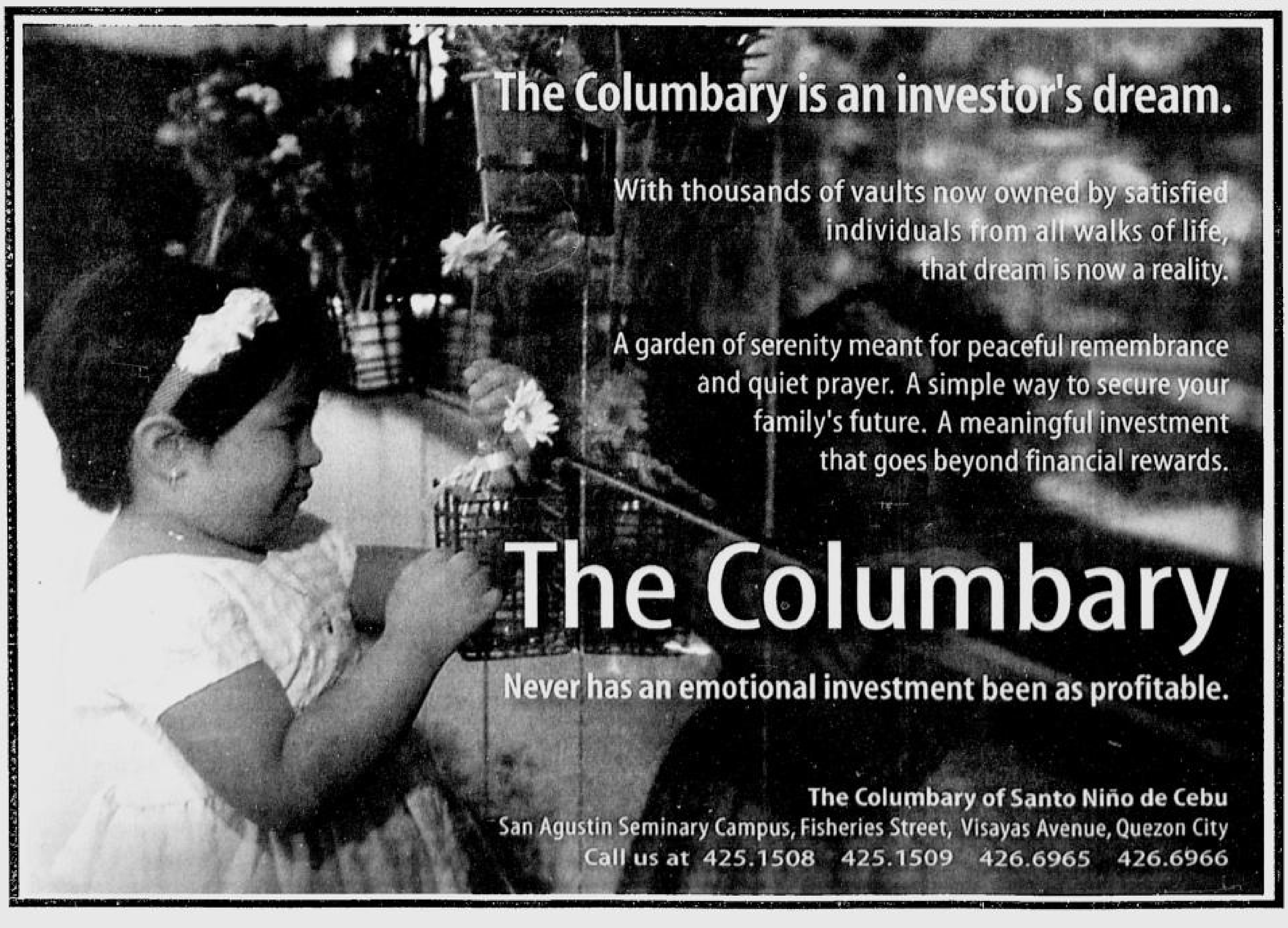
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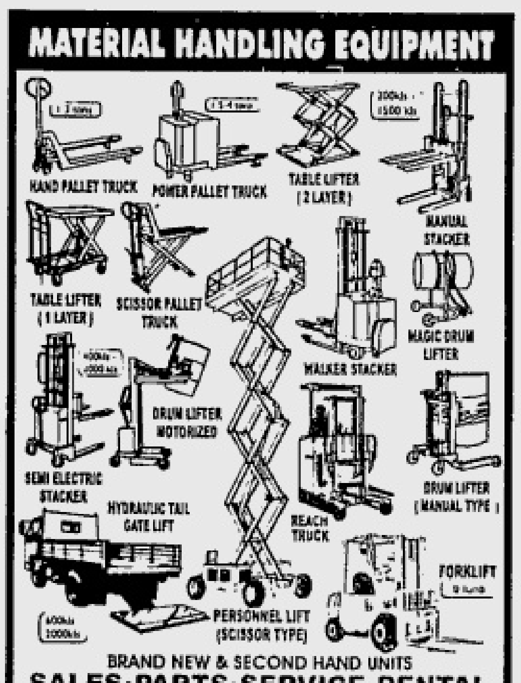

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Cha-cha survey skewed, solon says

A RECENT survey commissioned by a pro-Charter change group showing that 78.9 percent of Filipinos favored amending the Constitution was misleading, Bayan Muna Rep. Liza Maza said yesterday.

Maza questioned the results of the survey commissioned by the Coalition for Charter Change Now!, saying it was deliberately made to appear that there was a nationwide clamor to amend the Charter.

She said "elementary mathematics would reveal that 1,952 of the 3,500 survey respondents nationwide that favored Charter change constituted only 55.7 percent of respondents."

"That can hardly be considered a clamor," she said.

Marietta Primicias-Goco, a convenor of the pro-Charter change group, had said 78.98 percent of 3,600 Filipino voters surveyed nationwide agreed to making changes to the 1987 Constitution.

She said of those in favor of amendments, 54.18 percent favored a constituent assembly over a constitutional convention as the method of amending the Charter.

Maza noted, however, that only 70.61 percent, or 2,471 of the 3,500 respondents, answered "yes" to the first question: "Are you aware or have you heard or read anything about the present Constitution?"

She said that 2,471 should therefore be the baseline figure for determining the percentages of the answers to subsequent questions.

This would mean that only 1,058 of the 3,500 respondents, or 30 percent, prefer a constituent assembly while 829 of the 3,500 respondents, or 23 percent, prefer a constitutional convention. *Gerald G. Lacuarta*

Lakas members eye FVR for 2004

ILOILO CITY—A group of original Lakas-NUCD (National Union of Christian Democrats) members is quietly working to present former President Fidel V. Ramos as an "alternative candidate" in next year's presidential elections.

"A great majority in the party" is open to the idea, said former Ifugao Rep. Gualberto Lumauig, "in case President Macapagal-Arroyo stays out of the race."

Lumauig, head of the Lakas-NUCD-UMDP (United Muslim Democrats of the Philippines) media bureau, was here on Sunday as guest of the public affairs program "Serbisyo Publiko" at Hotel del Rio.

Ramos, who was president from 1992 to 1998, has a good track record and is still physically fit, Lumauig told the INQUIRER.

The ex-president turned 75 on March 18, but since he was in China at the time, he celebrated the occasion with family and friends on April 2. During the party, Lumauig said, Ramos was repeatedly urged to consider running but all he would say was "*Hindi na, hindi na* (no more, no more)."

"But he's hard to read," Lumauig said. "He keeps people guessing all the time." *Raj Padilla, PDI Visayas Bureau*

'Amang' heads for Batanes

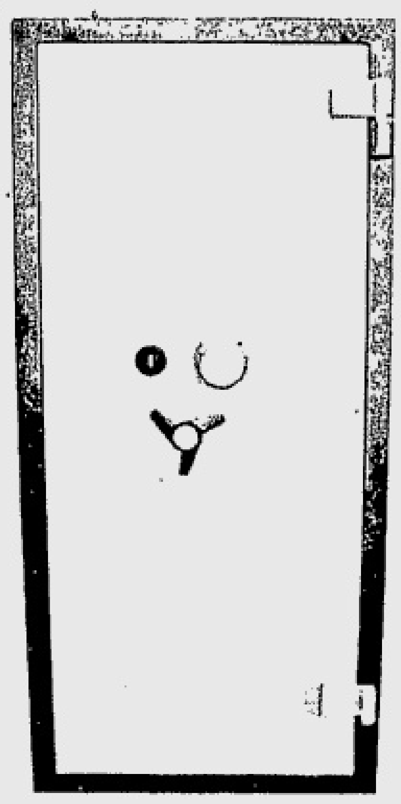
TYPHOON "Amang" (international name: Kujira) continued to move closer to Batanes as it moved northwest toward Taiwan yesterday, prompting the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration to heighten storm level warnings in the country's northernmost islands.

The typhoon was expected to come as close as 60 km to the Batanes group early today, Pagasa said.

The weather bureau said Amang, with sustained winds of 130 km per hour and gusts up to 160 kph, was charted at 4 a.m. yesterday about 390 km southeast of Basco, the capital of Batanes.

Moving northwest at 13 kph, it is expected to be just 50 km northwest of Basco by Wednesday.

Pagasa said the Batanes group will have stormy weather while the eastern section of Northern Luzon will experience rains with occasional gusty winds. *G. Lacuarta*



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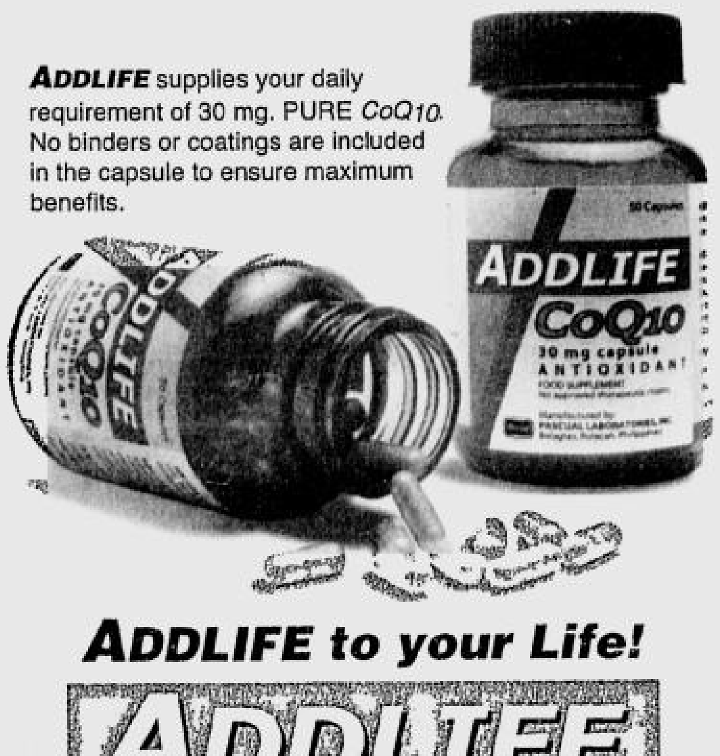

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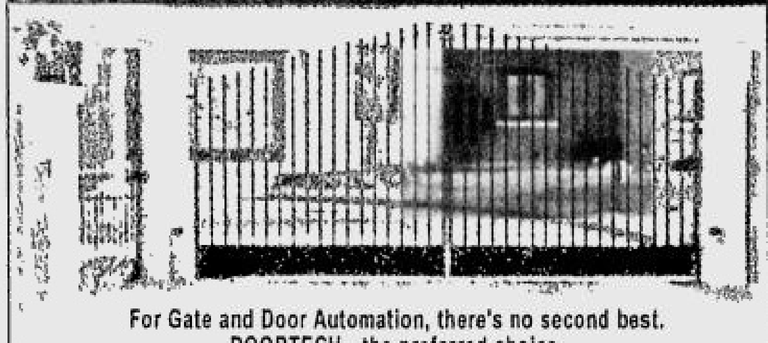

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BIR drive catches 95% of businesses cheating

By Clarissa S. Batino and Agnes E. Donato

A STAGGERING 95 percent of inspected business establishments in eight cities have been found in violation of one or more tax requirements, the Bureau of Internal Revenue reported yesterday.

BIR Commissioner Guillermo Parayno said that since the start of the month, the agency had "visited" 4,201 business establishments in Parañaque, Las Piñas, Pasay, Caloocan, Valenzuela, Trece Martinez in Cavite, Tondo in Manila, and Banawe in Quezon City, in line with its Tax Compliance Verification Drive.

Of this number, a total of 3,992 enterprises "big and small" were found in violation of BIR rules and regulations in the conduct of their business, Parayno said.

Among the businesses were international fast-food chains, local restaurants with branches nationwide and gasoline stations.

"This should allay the fears of the leadership of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry," the commissioner said, referring to the PCCI's recent call for the inclusion of big establishments in the BIR's tax mapping campaign launched on April 1.

In the interest of fairness, the PCCI had wanted to include big businesses in the tax drive.

The raids in Caloocan, Trece Martires and Tondo yielded the highest number of violators, with 99 percent committing one or more irregularities.

Parayno reported that 2,076 or 49 percent of the establishments inspected were not issuing official receipts for purchases. Almost one-fourth of the businesses were located in Caloocan City. Found unregistered with the BIR were 1,535 businesses or 37 percent.

Another much-violated requirement was the maintenance of books of accounts. The raiding teams found 2,264, or 54 percent, of the firms had no such books.

"If these business establishments do not comply with the most basic requirements such as the issuance of receipts, how much more when they declare their sales and income for tax purposes?" Parayno said. The tax mapping campaign is just one of the programs the BIR is implementing to reduce the level of tax evasion, he said.

According to the BIR chief, a total of 300,000 establishments nationwide are for spot audits this year.

Other common violations uncovered in the past three weeks were: possession or use of unregistered receipts, possession or use of multiple sets of receipts, use of unregistered books of accounts, non-registration of professionals, failure to properly post the certificate of registration, and use of unregistered cash register machines.

Saline 'tilapia' answer to GMA's call

DAGUPAN CITY—Filipinos could be feasting on *tilapia*, like President Macapagal-Arroyo wants, when production of the saline variety of the fish goes full-scale, a Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources official said.

Westly Rosario, local BFAR center chief, said the agency has come up with the molobicus variety of tilapia, a strain that grows faster and tolerates higher salinity.

"There are 250,000 hectares of brackish water all over the country that are underutilized. If saline tilapia is cultured in these waters, the price of tilapia would go down," Rosario said.

Ms Macapagal had said Filipinos should switch to eating *tilapia* because it is now cheaper and more readily available than *galunggong*, the original "poor man's fish."

But Rosario said tilapia is still not "very acceptable" in the Visayas and Mindanao where the people prefer saltwater fish to cultured fish.

"But with the dwindling catch from the sea, there is really no alternative but to eat cultured fish like tilapia," he said.

Before the introduction of saline tilapia, fish farmers cultured only the freshwater species, according to Rosario.

Since there are only 15,000 hectares of freshwater areas in the country, he said, "if we want to go full-blast with tilapia farming, we must use brackish water areas because these are more readily available in the country," he said.

The molobicus variety is a hybrid of Gift (Genetically Improved Farm Tilapia, a strain of nilotica or pla-pla), a freshwater and fast-growing variety, and the native tilapia or mossambica, which is resistant to high salinity.

The molobicus got the best traits of its parents–mossambica's high salinity tolerance and nilotica's fast growth. *Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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Mandapat; 87

FEDERICO "Iding" Muñoz-Mandapat Sr., former Baguio city deputy chief of police and Philippine team hurdler in the 1940 Far Eastern Games, died on April 14.

He is survived by his wife Aurelia "Liling"Javier-Mandapat and children.

His remains lie at 247 Camp 7 Kennon Road, Baguio City. Interment is on Thursday. Necrological services will be held at 10 a.m. at the Baguio Cathedral.

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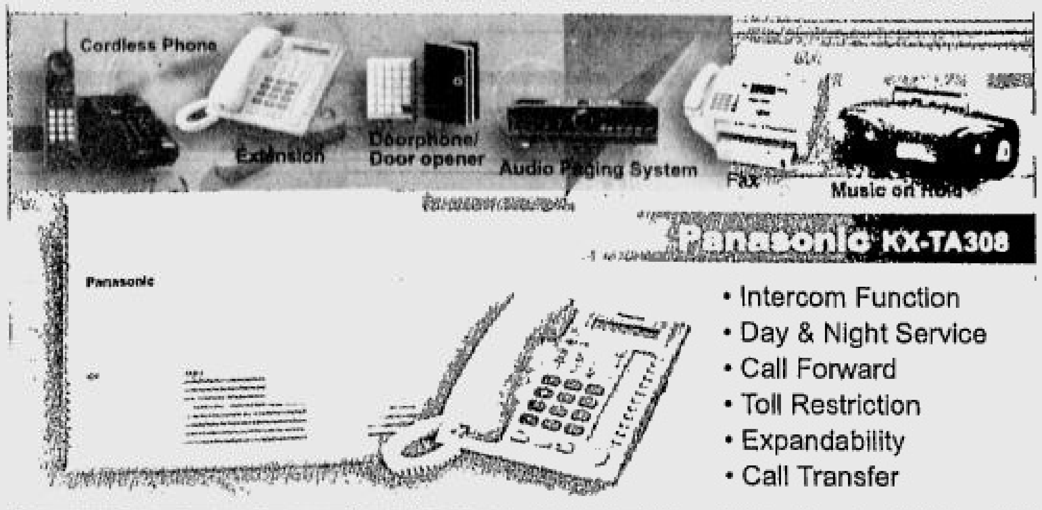

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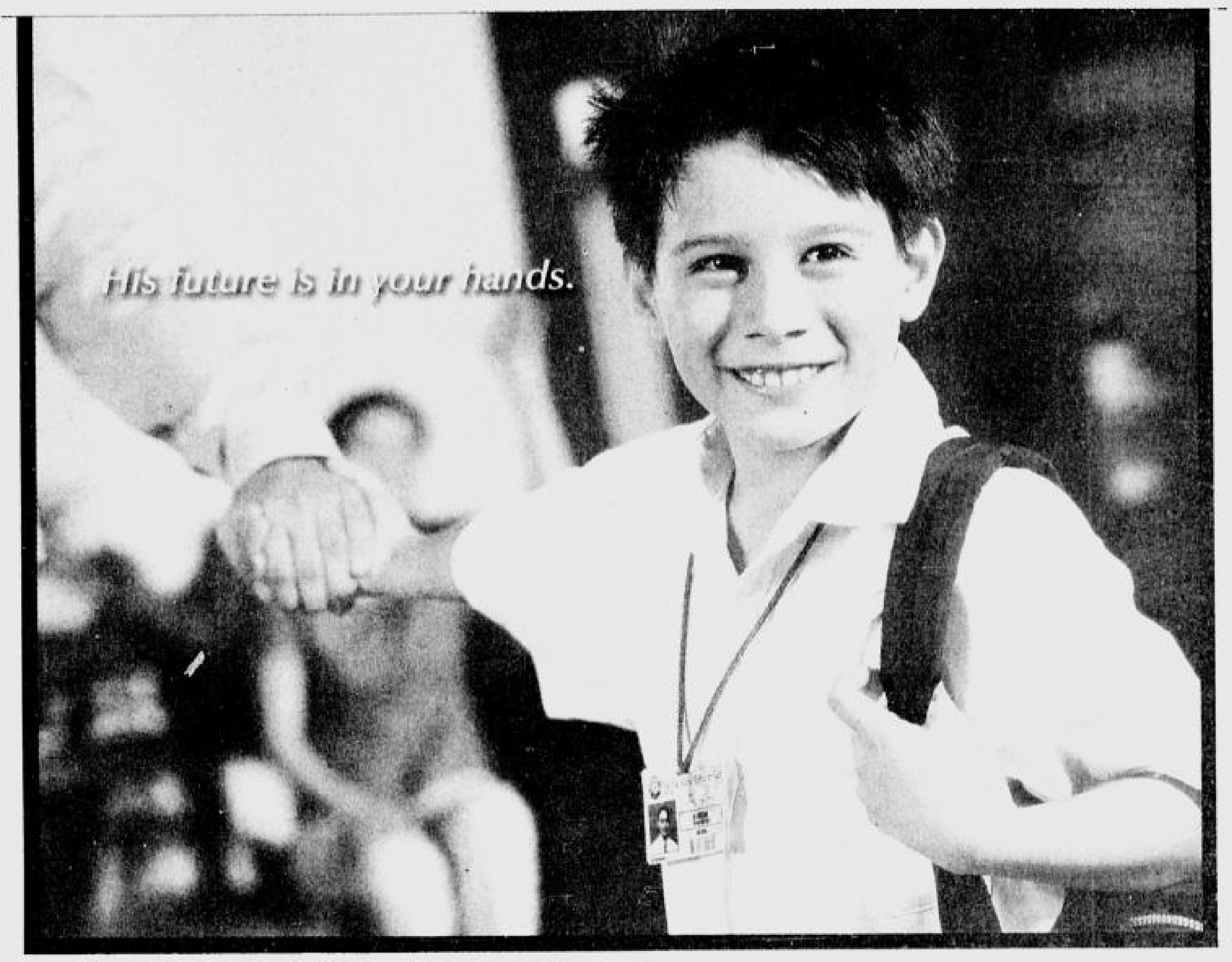
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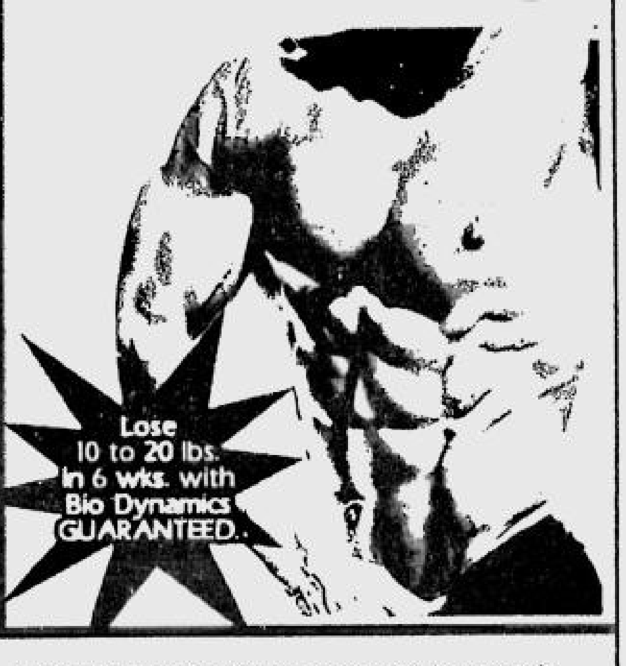

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Meralco tells SC: One year only

From page A1

predecessor of the Energy Regulatory Commission, had placed Meralco's excess charges from 1994 to February 1998 at P10.8 billion.

But a group of scientists yesterday said the amount had ballooned to P38 billion if adjustments for the fluctuations in the currency exchange rate and the interest in customers' deposits were included.

Denied with finality

Meralco's motion came a week after the third division of the Supreme Court "denied with finality" the utility firm's motion for reconsideration of the high tribunal's Nov. 15, 2002 decision, which found Meralco had overcharged its customers.

The overcharging stemmed from Meralco's decision to include income taxes and assets not directly related to the business in its operating expenses. The Supreme Court ruled that Meralco could not do that.

After Meralco was granted a provisional increase of 18.4 centavos per kWh in 1994, its return on rate base (RORB), a measure of profitability, rose to 21.04 percent, or almost double the 12-percent ceiling for public utilities.

Of the 21.04 percent RORB, 7 percentage points were due to the income tax passed on to customers. Even without the income tax item, Meralco's RORB stood at 13.95 percent, or still above the 12-percent limit. The two-percentage-point excess was attributed to the inclusion in the rate base of assets unrelated to electricity distribution, according to COA.

Because of the overcharging, the ERB ordered Meralco in 1998 to roll back its rates by 16.7 centavos per kWh and refund its customers a total of P10.8 billion. Meralco went to the Court of Appeals, which overturned the ERB order. In turn, the ERB elevated the case to the Supreme Court, which upheld the ERB order last Nov. 15.

In its motion, Meralco said the high tribunal's April 9 ruling "has not absolutely upheld the position that income taxes cannot be recovered by a public utility by any means."

Cuna called the petition a motion for consideration, and not for reconsideration, as the high court had already ruled with finality. "I have only learned about this (yesterday) and I could not explain what it is without a lawyer's help," he said.

Exhaust all means

Meralco president Jesus Francisco said the motion showed that the firm's lawyers were exhausting all legal means to have the Supreme Court decision changed.

"I did not even know that one could file yet another motion after a decision had become final," Francisco said.

Last week, Francisco said Meralco's cash flow did not make a full refund possible. But Francisco said the utility's management would seek a meeting with the Energy Regulatory Commission to determine the actual amount to be refunded.

P5-B debt

The Supreme Court's refund order raised fears that Meralco was in danger of defaulting on about P5 billion of its debts this first semester as it was not able to raise electricity rates to the desired levels.

Meralco officials had said the refund could be as low as P8 billion, but the Samahan ng Nagtataguyod sa Agham at Teknolohiya para sa Sambayanan (Agham), said yesterday that the refund had risen to P38 billion, up from P28 billion in November.

"We have to include the Cera (currency exchange rate adjustment) because it is calculated based on the prevailing basic charge," Agham chair Giovanni Tapang said.

The University of the Philippines-based professor explained that actual Meralco bills between 1994 and March 2003 showed an average Cera of 4.97 percent, or an additional of P1.1 billion.

"If there is an overcharging in the basic rate, then there must be an overcharging in the Cera," Tapang said.

Tapang, who has a doctorate in physics, said that interest on customers' deposits should also be included in the refund as Meralco has been withholding this.

A customer shells out the deposit—equivalent to his estimated consumption for a month plus half the price of the electric meter—before Meralco starts delivering electricity. He can take back the money when he wishes to end his subscription for the utility's services.

Consumer groups have noted that their deposits earned interest over the years, which Meralco was keeping instead of returning to customers. *With reports from Ronnel W. Domingo and AFP*

Palace hails . . .

From page A1

United States was pulling out all its troops from Baghdad, which the Marines seized on April 9.

The government yesterday also hailed the "unparalleled courageous stance" of overseas Filipino workers in the Middle East during the monthlong US war in Iraq, saying this proved the Filipinos' commitment to their families and their jobs.

In a statement, Overseas Workers Welfare Administration chief Virgilio Angelo, who is still in Kuwait, said the latest technology played a great role in the government's contingency plan.

"The availability of satellite communication links and video conferencing facilities has helped allay the fears of OFW families in the Middle East," Angelo said.

In the Palace statement, President Macapagal-Arroyo was quoted as saying that while the war was won "in the armored front ... the larger struggle for political restoration and social healing has only just begun."

She noted that the Philippine government was extending humanitarian and peacekeeping assistance to the Iraqi people in the same way it gave moral and political support to the US-led war.

"This is about goodwill, friendship and strategic diplomacy," Ms Macapagal said.

The President earlier appointed former Foreign Secretary Roberto Romulo chair of the task force to coordinate public and private efforts for the reconstruction of Iraq, and businessman Jose de Ibazeta as ambassador to Baghdad.

"Iraq's political and economic restoration is important to us because we have a stake in peaceful democracy anywhere in the world, especially in a region that hosts more than 1.2 million Filipino workers," the President said.

Free calls

The Owwa has facilitated around 20,000 free calls to certain countries in the Middle East, mostly Kuwait, since the agency's Kalinga project started on March 17, a few days before the war in Iraq erupted.

The agency had set up three major centers providing three-minute video conference linkups in Metro Manila: at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium, the Owwa head office in Pasay and the Presidential Action Center in Malacañang. The Owwa installed a total of 300 phones in the centers.

Its 15 regional offices also provided free calls through mobile phones during the war to allow families in the provinces to speak with their loved ones in the Middle East.

The government agency did not spend for the calls, because the communication lines were installed by the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., Smart Communications, Globe Telecoms and Sun Cellular.

Owwa Deputy Administrator Delmer Cruz said the calls, which came 24 hours daily at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium, calmed overseas workers and their families during the second crisis to hit the Middle East since 1991.

He said that the "bayanihan" (community) spirit among Filipino communities in Kuwait particularly, where a shelter for relocating OFWs was set up, made the government's work easier.

Close to 2,000 former OFWs, OFW relatives, policemen and government officials gathered at the Philippine Trade and Training Center on Roxas Boulevard yesterday for the government's Pasasalamat sa OFWs program.

President . . .

From page A1

Ms Macapagal added that she would show the evacuees the newly built road in Buliok and the newly planted corn "so they will see there's life after the fighting."

The decision to go to Pikit was apparently a last-minute one.

She was scheduled to address the commencement exercises of the University of Mindanao in Davao City this morning and then return to Manila right after.

Instead, she has decided to fly to Pikit this afternoon to visit the evacuees.

During the teleconference at the Philippine Trade Training Center (PTTC) on Roxas Boulevard, Ms Macapagal said she was thankful no Filipino was hurt in the recent war in Iraq.

"Here in the Philippines, many people were hurt, many had to evacuate due to the fighting in Mindanao," she said.

From the PTTC, she went to the airport for her flight to Davao City.

In February, the President ordered the military to capture the Buliok complex, a stronghold of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in North Cotabato and Maguindanao provinces.

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Barbers: Senate report not 'dirty trick' vs Ping

By Michael Lim Ubac

SENATE Committee Report No. 66 is not aimed at derailing Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson's presidential bid.

Sen. Robert Barbers told reporters yesterday the administration would not resort to "dirty tricks" to foil Lacson's political plans.

"No one among the administration's presidentiables is afraid of him," Barbers said.

The administration senator is chair of the Senate committee on public order and illegal drugs, lead committee in the 2001 probe into Lacson's alleged criminal activities.

The report, which called for Lacson's indictment for high crimes, was completed in the same year but was routed "for further study," particularly by opposition senators.

Brushing aside Lacson's repeated claims of political persecution by the ruling party, Barbers said there was no intention to bar the opposition solon from the next presidential election, "and there will never be."

The report recommended that the justice department conduct a preliminary investigation into Lacson's alleged involvement in kidnapping-for-ransom, smuggling and drug trafficking.

Barbers said all opposition senators, except Lacson, had signed the report.

He also clarified that the report was in no way affected by the retraction of Angelo "Ador" Mawanay, since not a single claim of the former anti-Lacson witness had been "factored" into it.

PNP reshuffle falls through

THE MAJOR reshuffle in the Philippine National Police involving 19 generals and colonels did not take place yesterday as scheduled after more officers were added to the reorganization list, officials said yesterday.

Police Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr., PNP chief, did not issue the orders moving the 19 officials "because of new additions" to the list, said Senior Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil, police spokesperson.

Another police official, however, said the reshuffle could not be implemented because of opposition to the designation of Chief Supt. George Aliño, formerly of the Maritime Group, as police director for Region II.

"Some local officials in Region II have opposed his appointment for unknown reasons. General Aliño has a problem here. Until this is resolved, the reshuffle cannot take effect," said the official, a police general who asked not to be named.

Bataoil, however, disputed this, saying the officials on the original reshuffle list would remain. He said earlier the list had been approved by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"I think there will be a little adjustment on the list. We see some additions because some officers will be retiring. So there will be more than 19 officers (reshuffled)," he said. He did not say, however, who the new officials were.

The major reshuffle was announced last week following the retirement of Deputy Director General Clyde Fernandez, deputy chief for administration, on April 1. Fernandez's retirement created an opening which allowed the officers to move up.

The group Police ROTC Graduates for Integrity, Morality and Order (Primo), meanwhile, assailed the reshuffle, saying most of the officials named to key posts were graduates of the Philippine Military Academy. *TJ Burgonio*

Pinoy held in death on the high seas

BRISBANE, Australia—A Filipino sailor accused in the stabbing to death of a shipmate aboard a Philippine-registered vessel off Australia was remanded in custody after appearing in court on Monday.

Vicente Mirasol, 44, faced a magistrates court in Queensland state over the murder, which police said occurred on Friday when an argument broke out in the dining room between the two men on the MV Endeavor, a bulk coal carrier registered in Manila and crewed by 23 Filipinos.

Because the killing occurred in Australian territorial waters, Mirasol would remain in Australia and not be deported to the Philippines, police said.

Mirasol was remanded in custody until June 25 when he is to appear again in the same court. Police have not released the victim's name but said the Philippine consulate had been notified and was expected to inform his relatives.

Acting Detective Senior Sgt. Des Mahoney said the ship was sailing from South Korea to Newcastle, north of Sydney, when the fight broke out about 55 km east of Point Cartwright on Queensland's Sunshine Coast. *AP*

UP grads 'give back' P7M

THE UNIVERSITY of the Philippines Alumni Association has donated P7 million to the UP library modernization fund. UP libraries are in the process of converting their collections to electronic format, acquiring journal databases and more computers, and firming up their online services.

In his remarks at the handover ceremony, UPAA president Eduardo F. Hernandez challenged UP alumni to "compete" in giving to their alma mater.

"In Boston society, the cream of the crop compete not in terms of their jewelry, cars or lavish parties, but in donating to universities and humanitarian causes," he said. "That is the thrust of my administration. We want the alumni to compete with each other in giving something back to UP."

The donation was the biggest single contribution by the UPAA in the last three years under the present board. The money was on top of the P17 million the board raised before its three-year term ends in June.

"We traveled all over the country to seek the support of alumni for this project," said lawyer Gari M. Tiongco, UPAA first vice president.

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Vol. 18 No. 133
ISSN
0116-2642

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The Philippine Daily Inquirer, Inc. has its business and editorial offices at
•Chino Roces Ave corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
•P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City
•Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
•Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 •Advertising 897-4807
•Circulation 527-3342 / 527-3348 / 528-0183 / 528-0186 and 528-0213 / Fax: 528-02-34.

Publisher **Isagani Yambot**
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Environmental bomb

EDITORIAL

THE OBSERVANCE of Earth Day today should once again make us focus on the state of our environment. And judging from the reports of government agencies and environmental groups, the environmental situation in the country has not improved. On the contrary there has been a steady deterioration and degradation of the environment.

Consider the following: In 1903 the country had more than 21 million hectares of forests. Now it is estimated that the forest cover is only 5.4 million hectares. About 5.2 million hectares of our soils are severely eroded. Last year, barely 10 percent of the country's fish stocks were left in our seas and coasts, no thanks to illegal fishing and more efficient fishing methods.

About 80 percent of the country's coral reefs, the breeding and feeding grounds of fish, are severely damaged. Fifty of the country's 421 rivers are already dead and many lakes are ecologically endangered. From 500,000 hectares in the 1920s, mangrove areas, the nurseries of most marine life, have gone down to only 120,000 hectares.

Air quality levels in the big cities are below World Health Organization standards. Heavy air pollution in the four largest metropolitan areas is costing the country about P21 billion a year, according to the World Bank. Only 6 percent of municipal waste is recycled and 73 percent is collected. The national waste collection efficiency rate is a poor 40 percent.

Deforestation is causing the destruction of wildlife habitat and the extinction of many species. Philippine fauna are the most severely endangered in the world.

The sorry state of the country's environment can be largely attributed to the decisions and actions of the elite. The Center for Environmental Concerns says that the elite have plundered the country's resources under cover of the government's "development strategies." The elite have practically monopolized the country's natural resources.

Corporate giants pollute and degrade the country's environment in the course of exploiting its natural resources. The Center for Environmental Concerns gives these examples: Firms dumping chemicals into the Pasig River declare their support for the effort to revive the river—but only in press releases. Logging firms endorse the government's reforestation program—but only after they've denuded forests.

Capitalism and the free market system are causing a lot of waste. But we have to be thankful that because of the poverty of the average Filipino, we are not as wasteful as the Americans. Poverty forces many of us to re-use and recycle things.

Many environmental problems involve money, politics and the exercise of power. We have to put a stop to patronage politics. As columnist Rina J. David put it, "Those in government who intervene on behalf of environmental criminals are accomplices [and] they, too, must be held accountable."

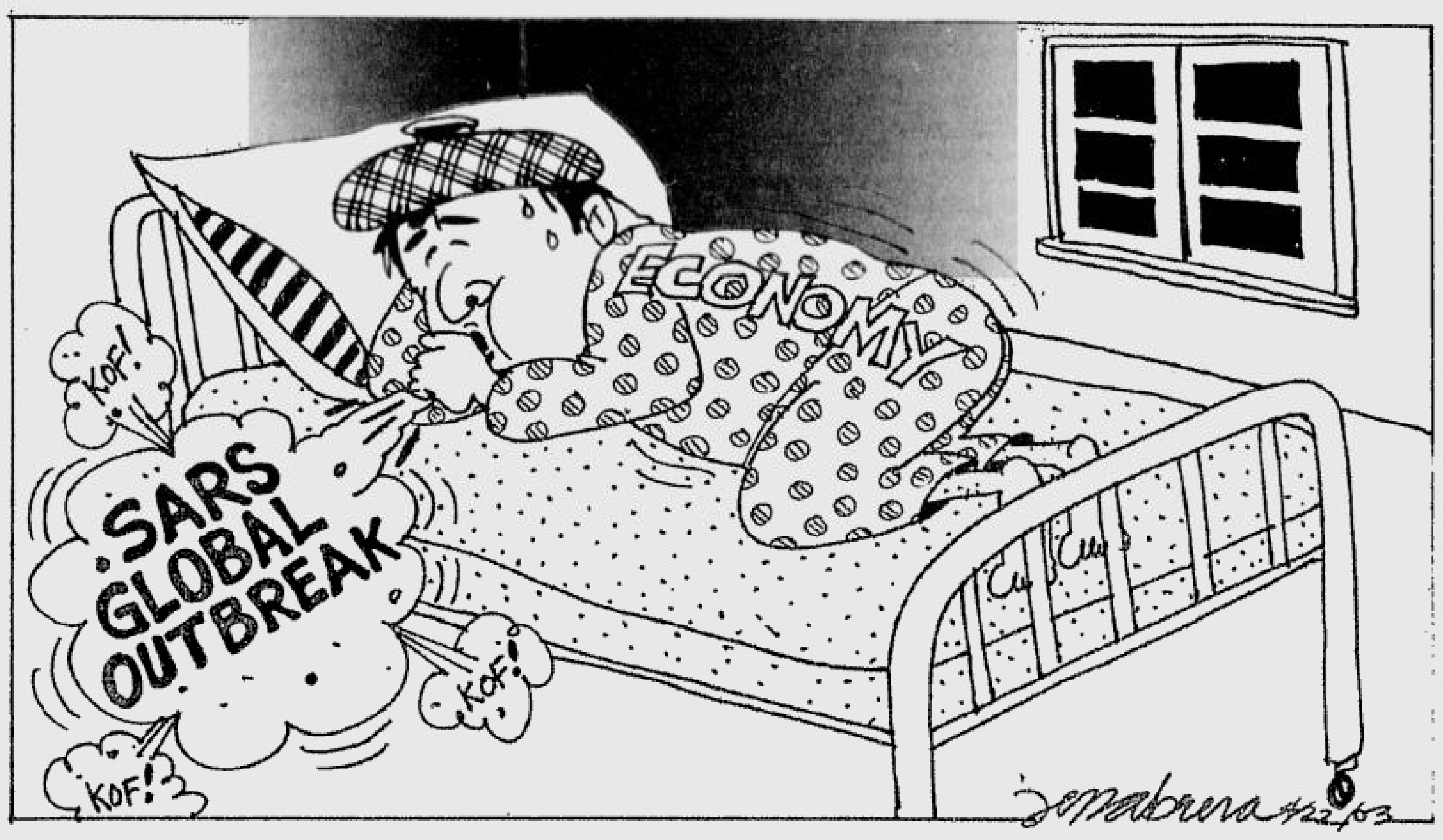
What can be done? First, governmental agencies and non-government organizations have to review the laws on the environment and check if they are being strictly enforced. The corruption of environmental agencies has to be exposed and stopped. Unless corruption is curbed, we cannot hope to see the scrupulous conservation and protection of our natural resources.

Second, environmental problems should not be viewed in isolation but should be seen as being interrelated with one another. For instance, deforestation gives rise to other environmental problems such as the extinction of some species, siltation of rivers, the destruction of watersheds and a consequent water shortage. Solve one big environmental problem and you solve a host of others.

Third, consider the political, economic and socio-cultural aspects of the problem. A fuller understanding of the cultural milieu could lead to a better grasp of environmental or developmental problems.

Fourth, we must realize that environmental problems are not insoluble. Science created new, improved things but it also produced pollution and a lot of wastes. But science can also find the solutions to these problems. The principle here is that the solution to a problem created by science also lies in science.

The environmental bomb is ticking in our country, and no one can stop its explosion except us. As Pogo, the cartoon character, said, "We have met the enemy, and it is us." People cause pollution and the degradation of the environment. They should realize that in doing these they are harming themselves. It is also the people, ultimately, who will have to find and carry out solutions to environmental problems.



GMA should visit this police center

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has taken to making surprise visits to police precincts, headquarters and community centers. And she has surprised many police officers who were not in their places of assignments or in police uniform or, worse, snoozing the time away. They got a taste of the famous presidential temper and received a tongue-lashing and were reassigned or suffered worse punishment.

Will the President please make a surprise visit to the police community center under the flyover at the corner of Commonwealth Avenue and Tandang Sora in Quezon City and surprise the policemen assigned there.

Traffic is very bad at this intersection. Drivers and commuters violate traffic rules with impunity. You'd think that with a police center right there, people would be afraid to violate the law and that traffic would be in order. But no, drivers behave as if they're sure the policemen would not bother them. I wonder why.

The Department of Public Works and Highways has widened Commonwealth Avenue to speed up the flow of traffic. It has also built waiting sheds for commuters. The Metro Manila Development Authority has put up signs and painted yellow boxes on the street itself. Rep. Chuck Mathay built a community center for the police.

At all hours of the day, there are police cars parked under the flyover. Policemen lounge in chairs outside the police center.

Right across the street, commuters wait for rides right at the intersection, under signs that say: "No Loading/Unloading" and "Doon po ang Sakayan" (pointing to the waiting shed).

But nobody waits there. They wait right at the corner and jeepneys and buses stop for them there, blocking vehicles turning right from Tandang Sora.

Policemen sitting outside the center can see the anarchy going on. But do they look out the window? Do they do anything? No, they behave as if they don't see anything.

It would be so easy for any one of them to walk across the street and tell the commuters to wait for rides in the waiting shed in front of the Shell gas station. The buses and jeepneys would thus stop there to load and unload passengers. But nobody seems to have any strength to get up from the chair. Or, even without getting up, to blow a whistle and point the commuters and the drivers to the waiting shed. But even that seems to be an effort beyond the strength of the overworked policemen.

The MMDA put orange plastic barricades across one lane of Commonwealth so that commuters cannot stand there to wait for rides. The Quezon City government put two big signs saying, "No Loading/Unloading. SB" (which stands for "Serbisyong Bayan," or "Sonny Belmonte"). But the commuters simply stand beyond the plastic obstacles and the PU vehicles picked them up there. In spite of the fact that they are violating the very big signs, the policemen at the community center still act as if they were blind as bats.

On the other side of Commonwealth, on the route going to Fairview, there is also a waiting shed. But nobody waits for his ride there, either. Commuters wait in the middle of the street and jeepneys and buses stop and picked them up there. There are even barkers calling for passengers while the vehicles wait in the middle of the street.

This is literally within spitting distance of the policemen in the community center. And even if they are blind or are sleeping, they can't help but hear the call for passengers of the barkers. But do they lift a finger? Even that is too much effort for them.

Once or twice, I peeked into the air-conditioned center and asked why nobody was directing the chaotic traffic. They answered that was the job of the traffic department and the MMDA. I asked some very high-ranking PNP officers if policemen who are not assigned to traffic can't direct traffic if they see that drivers are violating traffic rules and the traffic is in chaos. They replied that it is their duty to step in even if it is not their job. One of them even picked up the phone and gave orders to straighten out the traffic at the Commonwealth-Tandang Sora corner. But no such thing was done.

Why doesn't the MMDA attach two or more of its traffic cops to the community center? I asked. Or why not deputize barangay officials to direct traffic there? They live there anyway and the taxpayers are paying for their services but they're not doing anything.

The other day, I saw two men in civilian clothes, most likely *barangay tanod*, trying to direct the jeepneys and buses to the waiting shed. But why would they go there when the commuters are still waiting at the corner? I asked one of the two men why they didn't tell the commuters to wait at the shed. But they seemed to be embarrassed to order the commuters. And the drivers did not obey them. Because they knew that the *tanod* could not arrest them since they were not policemen.

So can't one of the uniformed policemen in the center just stand there with traffic violation receipts in his hand just to show that erring drivers can be arrested? Yes, just stand there while the *tanod* do the work that may be strenuous for the cops. And it would be better to put the *tanods* in uniforms to at least give them a semblance of authority.

Parking beside the Tierra wet market should also be prohibited as this is a very busy street corner.

How will drivers and commuters obey the law when they see it being violated at all times by others and they see that policemen in the community center don't bother to enforce the law at all?

Ms President, please come visit this center.

Flights of fancy

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

METRO Manila heaved a huge sigh last week, a sigh that was so loud you could hear it from Payatas to Ayala. Metro Manila was the best place to be at during the Holy Week, when the city unburdened itself of its afflictions, not least in the form of a growing and groaning population. No crunch of vehicles stewing in the streets, no black smoke issuing from car exhausts and burning garbage, no infant bawling next door, no snarls from deteriorating marriages in the neighborhood, no Puff Daddy blaring out from loudspeakers—it was as near to heaven as you could find.

I did not envy the horde that piled up a kilometer away from the Balintawak toll booth last Sunday night, tired and bedraggled from trying to divine the mystery of Christ's crucifixion in the mysterious coves of Baguio and Sagada. Though slightly belatedly, they would have had a tremendous insight into the meaning of suffering.

The exodus from Manila of its residents was also a good reminder of the exodus to Manila of what are now its residents over the past decades. The Tagalogs of Metro Manila, or those who come from Tagalog families over the last couple of generations, are probably now the minority. You know that of course from conversations when people ask, "What province are you from"? The presumption being that you came from somewhere other than Metro Manila, a not unreasonable presumption as things stand. Holy Week is a reaffirmation of it. More than Christmas, it's the time of year when Metro Manila turns silent and desolate, most everyone having gone to the moon or their hometowns.

But though I thoroughly enjoyed staying right at home, I suddenly realized last Friday night, while sailing through half-deserted streets, the dull fluorescent lights in a few opened restaurants keeping vigil in the dark, that this was the time of year when thoughts turn to travel. I suddenly thought, while partaking of unleavened bread and kebab in a Persian place in Timog (the better to catch a whiff of Biblical times), how nice it would be to feel hot *bulalo* soup swirling in the belly in early morning in a roadside eatery in Gumaca on the way to Bicol, as the sun pushed out in a yellow blaze through the sea. I suddenly tasted in the quiet of the night the giant scallops in Tatoi's in Iloilo City and the equally huge *kuracha* swimming in *aligue* sauce in Alavar's in Zamboanga.

I suddenly discovered, after being caught up in the blaze of battle in the desert sands halfway across the world, that it was summer in this country.

Over the past decade or so, I've been trying to rediscover the country by land, sea and air, particularly during summer. Accepting talks helps do the trick as I am not a rich man. My growing preference for exploring this country rather than places abroad has only partially to do with gout—it does produce moments of anxiety feeling the onset of an episode in places where walking long distances is not just an idle pastime but an absolute necessity. There are no tricycles in Europe or the United States. But more than that, it is the realization—which happens to you as you grow older and hopefully wiser—that the strangest, most exotic, most mysterious places, are the ones closest to you. Try exploring Metro Manila itself, Lent or no Lent (though you have to exercise much forbearance outside of Lent from traffic), and you will see what I mean.

The logic of that statement goes further than you can imagine: The strangest, most mysterious, most surprising people are the ones closest to you. Indeed, the most inscrutable, unwelcoming, unknowable, person is yourself. But that is another story, that is another travel, that is another exploration.

So far, I've been more partial to the South and largely the Visayas which for some reason has been a powerful magnet to me. I guess part of the reason for it is the mode of travel, which is by sea and air. The North is accessible largely by land (the fate of Laoag Air does not encourage much else), which is not the most pleasant way to get to places. Though I am curious, I am not hardy. But I'll get to scour it one day.

But as I said, that is only part of the reason and a very small one. The bigger reason is sensibility: I am more drawn to the culture of the Visayas, with its passion, color and variety than others. Sea travel having become easier and infinitely more pleasurable, thanks to the Superferry, island-hopping is now something to relish, or look forward to.

Ironically, my mother, who is a Tagalog (my father is the Bicolano, from Catanduanes), always expressed a strong preference for the culture of the North rather than the South. Indeed, she frowned on the Visayans' penchant for partying frequently and lavishly, a trait a couple of Visayan families showed resolutely in our impoverished neighborhood when I was a kid. Her attitude was little helped by the shouting and quarreling that often attended their fierce and protracted drinking. It was the industry and frugality of the Ilocanos that held my mother's admiration. "Don't you ever become a *burachero*," she used to say passionately. What can I say? Some of her lessons were lost on me.

There is one other way to travel, one worth considering these hot and dusty months. It goes even farther than the feet will carry, though it is one the kids today will probably protest energetically. That is by reading. You can always do both, in any case. You can always carry a book with you while slouched under a palm tree on a beach somewhere, which has the virtue, as the Accidental Tourist points out, of warding off unwanted attention.

Well, it may also have the curse of discouraging wanted attention. But that is still another story.

Looking for two or three senators

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

TRUST FILIPINOS to see humor in every crisis. The joke going around is that if the Philippines has remained SARS-free, it's because the SARS virus now afflicting some 25 countries around the world is afraid to show up here. The virus knows it will drown in the pollution here, unlike in countries like Singapore and Canada where it has flourished because the antiseptic environment has deprived people of their natural immunity.

Seriously speaking, though, this new plague threatens to wreck economies like no other crisis did in modern times. Let us all pray it continues to spare our land.

* * *

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was able to relax from the duties of state during the latter half of the Holy Week, which she spent in Baguio City. Continuing her campaign for tourism, President Macapagal and First Gentleman Mike Arroyo flew by helicopter to Banaue, 40 minutes away, with the family of Speaker Jose de Venecia. From there they motored for another hour and a half to Hungduan, where the view of the rice terraces is at it most spectacular best. In Baguio, GMA played 18 holes of golf at Club John Hay with boy wonder Miguel Tabuena, Class E champion of the Junior World Masters Golf tournament in Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia. The eight-year-old Miguel, grandson of former airport manager Louie Tabuena and his wife Conchita (and nephew of Martin Nievera), who has a handicap of six (compared to the average adult's handicap of 28 to 36), so impressed GMA that she gifted him with a golf scholarship. Who knows, he may yet become another Asian wonder like half-Thai Tiger Woods.

* * *

Far from losing steam, the campaign for Charter change has gained ground. Its proponents in the Coalition for Charter change Now are pointing to the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) as the latest convert to the parliamentary system. The PLO has retained Yasser Arafat as president but elected a prime minister recently, obviously in anticipation of gaining statehood and to be able to deal directly with many economic problems.

Marietta Goco, convenor of the coalition, has released the results of a new survey, completed last April 8 with 3,500 respondents, that show an overwhelming 78.98 percent of Filipino voters agreeing that the 1987 Constitution should be amended. Of this group, slightly over half prefer a constituent assembly over a Constitutional Convention. Among the various regions, said Goco, Mindanao had the highest support for Charter Change at 82.06 percent, followed by the Visayas with 80 percent and Luzon with 77.25. In Luzon the National Capital Region registered the highest support at nearly 80 percent. What is also significant is the dramatic increase in the number of those who favor a constituent assembly from last December's 38 percent.

* * *

I can believe these results, for there is overwhelming support for Charter change among the League of Governors and the League of Municipal and City Mayors. The local executives are fired up by the prospect of more autonomy under a proposed federal system, which is the natural progression within 10 years of the shift to a parliamentary system. There is also a growing clamor for Charter change even among ordinary citizens, who lament the frequent gridlock in Congress and the colossal expenses during presidential elections, and see the need for economic reforms if we are to catch up with the rest of Asia, where many countries have a parliamentary set-up.

Citizens also realize that the best time to effect Charter change is now, before a new president is elected in 2004. This is because delaying it to after the election would mean that changes will not take place until 2010, as the new presidential term cannot be shortened. But by 2010, so much momentum will have been lost, and the Philippines will continue to lag behind as our neighbors in this fastest-growing region sprint away.

* * *

With the growing clamor for Charter change among local executives and ordinary citizens, the focus is on the Senate. For while the resolution seeking Charter change through a constituent assembly was overwhelmingly passed by the House before the Holy Week break, it still awaits a simple majority vote in the Senate. But the chamber seems to be divided over the issue, and without the Senate's approval, Charter change is dead.

How do things stand there? Rep. Eduardo Nachura, a major proponent of change through a constituent assembly, has been quoted as saying that around 10 senators from various political groups now favor this stand. In which case, only two more votes are needed to pass the resolution.

I believe that the growing support among the senators comes from the realization that they would be in far better control of the results in a constituent assembly than in a Constitutional convention. Moreover, some senators who advocate federalism realize that this is the only hope of resolving the crisis in Mindanao.

* * *

Congress opened yesterday after the Holy Week recess and will continue its session up to June 5, after which it will adjourn again to open by July 28. The best time to pass the resolution on Charter change through a constituent assembly is now, so that the assembly can meet in August, September and October. Then November and December will be devoted to preparing for the plebiscite which can be held in January 2004. Under this scenario, the May 2004 elections could see the election of a president under the French parliamentary model and the members of the new parliament, or just the parliamentarians. It's a tight schedule but its possible if there's a political will.

Most of our people are tired of the old system and are excited to try a new one that has been proven to be a success around the world. They are looking for two more senators who will help them see this happen.

The subtext of fear

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

IN THE world of academic research, it might have looked like every red-blooded male's dream project.

A few years ago, Eric Ratliff obtained a Fulbright grant to do research on the women working in the "go-go bars" of Angeles and Makati, traveling as far as Leyte and Samar to interview the women's relatives and gain a first-hand view of the families and communities that nurtured them. But most of the time, Ratliff conducted research by hanging around the bars, talking to the women while they were entertaining customers or in their off-hours, inside the clubs or in their boarding houses. So familiar did Ratliff become to the women that they soon began calling him their American "*kuya*." And lest readers think Ratliff took advantage of his unique position as a researcher-confidante, he says he took pains to tell the women that he was married (to a Filipina), and that his interest in them was purely "academic."

Still, this did not prevent him from developing sympathy for his research subjects, or recognizing the social and cultural roots of the sex industry in this country. "You have to be careful of uncles because they might rape you" is the title he uses in a presentation on "Gender and Everyday Violence in the Philippines," an abstract of his doctoral dissertation for the Department of Anthropology of the University of Texas in Austin.

"Relations between men and women are informed by violence—not only the actual experiences of abuse, but also the images, public discourse, and memories concerning acts of brutality upon others," writes Ratliff. Seeking to show how "various forms of masculine aggression (physical, psychological, economic) influence women's roles and activities in Philippine society," Ratliff says the "macho" ideology of manhood "rationalizes forceful behavior toward women," while fostering the "complementary notion of a passive Filipino femininity."

* * *

"RELIGION supports this imagery," writes Ratliff, "presenting the wife/mother as a 'martyr' who suffers for the benefit of the all-important family (marriage and the ideology of 'the family' stress reproduction and the raising of children rather than the relationship between husband and wife). Filipinas who challenge male authority are subject to violent recrimination from husbands/fathers in the household with limited legal protection or social recourse. The state is also involved in the control of women's actions through the perpetuation of abusive situations (exploitative labor laws, ban on divorce), as well as the policing of women's public displays of 'immorality' (in appearance or behavior). Male domination is thus maintained by the ever-present threat of violence against women who transgress social norms."

Using samples from local media stories of violence against women, Ratliff then shows how, despite the many laws against abuse of women, including domestic violence, Filipino women get the subtext of fear loud and clear.

Graphic representations, by way of photographs or video images, or even of detailed and colorful descriptions, of forms of brutality against women help create this atmosphere of fear. "Women are constantly reminded of their powerlessness and position as 'victims' by their supposed vulnerability," says Ratliff. While highlighting women's victimization may serve "political ends," he says it also serves to reinforce "the assumption that women are powerless, and ironically, that safety may be found in the protective custody of male family members or the State." To illustrate his point, Ratliff uses a headline from this paper: "Wife who refused sex with hubby hit by club."

* * *

"RAPE in many Asian cultures is linked to feminine chastity, and women who are raped suffer a loss of 'virtue' since this form of violence is often seen as a lapse in personal morality," says Ratliff. He cites local statistics showing that women who are single and virgins have a 94 percent chance of obtaining a conviction in cases of rape, while rape cases involving single women who admit to no longer being virgins result in a conviction rate of only 32 percent. Married women who are raped are also deemed more believable in the Philippine justice system, with an 81 percent conviction rate, perhaps because they have engaged in "socially sanctioned" sexual relations.

Says Ratliff: "Such statistics communicate to women that legal protection is available for those who are chaste (either as virgins or married women), but those who are sexually active outside of marriage are ultimately responsible for any misfortune because their 'promiscuous' status renders rape a reasonable outcome."

* * *

THOUGH statistics have proven that most violence occurs in homes and is committed by family members, "the information that women receive from the media underscores the dangers of public spaces, where rape is presented as a crime committed by anonymous persons with some form of social pathology (rapists are usually described as 'mentally ill' or 'drug addicted')."

And so in this country, "women are ultimately blamed for venturing into what are perceived and presented as dangerous situations," and women who fail to act "sensibly," or who expose themselves to unnecessary risks by venturing out to public spaces, have only themselves to blame.

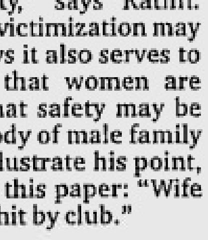
But if "ordinary" women in the Philippines live under a shadow of fear, threat, risk and blame, those whose behavior strays from the norm, because of sexual identity, practices or even occupation, are burdened further by their "stigmatization."

(More on this tomorrow.)

Lost assets

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper



"LAST night I dreamt of Manderly again..."

What reader of adventure and romantic tales doesn't recognize Daphne du Murier's opening lines which are almost as famous as "Call me Ishmael"? You'll be happy to know we have a number of our own little Manderlys courtesy of my favorite government agency, the Presidential Commission on Good Government. Actually there are several of them in Baguio. The Fairchild property is just one of them. For those of you who saw it before it was overtaken by wrack and ruin or more likely plain neglect, and a lack of accountability, here's to memory.

Finding himself in Baguio after an absence of several years, my friend was endeavoring to lose the 10 pounds he put on in a matter of two days by walking back to the apartment when he saw an opening in a garden wall of what was once known as the Fairchild Mansion. This was one of those delightfully quaint Baguio houses, white with green trimmings and a simple colonial architecture. Nothing ostentatious, nothing grand; not out to prove anything either--just a comfortable family home. Of course, it had three fireplaces (built at a time when Baguio was actually cool during certain times of year—these were useful, not decorative), two large living rooms and a kitchen and pantry big enough to resemble one of our present-day condos). It also sat on something like 2.5 hectares of very, very valuable real estate and for the past 17 long years has been considered part of the Marcos millions or billions or whatever amount is attributed to his estate these days.

There were ivy-covered trellises on the driveway leading to the house that was surrounded by rolling greens and century-old trees. The man, a balikbayan, had jitterbugged in this house, attended cook-out parties and fallen in love with a blonde from the American School as it was known then. (He remembered her because they were both so young and when he met her again years later she was an alcoholic.) He stood there, according to him, gazing at this stooped and weary structure at the end of the driveway now no longer welcoming but waiting for the wrecker's ball.

Inside, the floors had been eaten by termites and the ivy had crawled in. As dusk was closing in, it seemed to him that the rooms were filled with people who had once lived there and he could almost hear the slow heartbreaking strains of "Moonlight Serenade" that he had danced to. He stood there full of memories even if no furniture was left, no paintings decorated the walls, the floors bereft of their carpets, but the wide picture windows still looked out into a Baguio that he remembered to be green and smelling of pines. Driving up Kennon into the City of Pines, he had smelled nothing but the exhaust of buses, jitneys and tricycles, and he felt a certain pity for the young who have never known the summer capital as anything but polluted and overcrowded.

Now he stood looking into an open bathroom door where a broken basin had been left on the floor after someone had ripped it off its porcelain pedestal. He couldn't understand, of course. He felt the property to be more than just abandoned.

In the succeeding days he watched materials taken away across the ever crumbling fences.

He asked me who paid for the guards and the electricity and where was the famous *Tanodbayan*? What do you answer to questions like these? The PCGG was supposedly co-terminus with President Aquino. So far it has managed to outlive all the past administrations, with the public none the wiser as to what was sequestered and what happened to the properties and companies. We are a poor country, our officials constantly remind us as they pack their bags for yet another trip abroad. And yet we have watched these assets deteriorate into heaps of rubbish with no accountability.

Let me remind you again of what was observed of us over a hundred years ago by the Taft Commission: "...an absolute lack of any sense of responsibility on the part of a public officer to the public at large."

There was, on the Net at one time (I haven't checked if it's still there), a supposed inventory of Imelda Marcos' jewelry sequestered by the PCGG and kept in the vaults of the Central Bank. Not even the Bangko Sentral governor has seen them and when I asked whether these could be on exhibit to the public, the then chairperson with an odd name merely brushed the suggestion aside. So you and I and most taxpayers will never know whether the collection is still intact?

And what about the antiques in the Goldenberg and Teus Mansions on General Solano? Someone whispered that all the Georgian silver were gone as well as the life-size Tang guards that once stood outside a door upstairs.

There isn't much anyone can do for people who prefer to protest what they see as American arrogance, violation of human rights, invasions and the like but can't seem to see what is being done to them in the name of justice by their own government. They stood in front of the Luneta Hotel, a wonderful example of beaux srt that once housed a collection of Filipino costumes and textiles and now stands derelict. Across the way from them was the Army and Navy Club, a turn of the century structure that could have housed the city museum but instead also awaits the wrecker's ball. Let us not even mention Manila Hotel, our newest *panciteria*. Does anyone care?

Celebrating differences

YOUNG BLOOD

Samira Gutoc

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

SO one of Osama bin Laden's nieces hopes to hit the pop scene, an Iraqi boy band wants to be another Westlife and some Muslim movies might one day be nominated for the Oscars. Welcome to the 21st century.

Muslim, music and movies—do they mix? When rules are changing fast, and Islam stands steadfast (to the extent of being misunderstood as terrorism, Muslims should find new ways of dealing with life's challenges.

One problem that confronted me when I accepted a fellowship outside of the country was that I had no *mahram* (male relative) going with me. Relatives on my father's side objected to my making the trip. After all it wouldn't be for just a few days or weeks but for three months. And I was going to Europe, where some Muslim communities were reportedly facing a backlash from government policies limiting the influx of foreign nationals.

Did I have any worries? Hey, going to Oxford University was my dream since I was in high school. Why shouldn't I grab the chance to go there? Like I had always done before making any momentous decision, I asked for signs from Him.

I have often used gut feel in trying to determine the "right" decision. If I don't hear alarm bells going off in my head, I simply go ahead with what I plan to do. Thus when I felt no warning signs, I went ahead and accepted a research grant in the United Kingdom, where I had no relatives, no Muslim friends, no *mahram*, not even a single acquaintance.

A cousin advised me not to wear my *hijab* (head covering) to avoid being harassed. God would understand, said his wife.

But as in the past I ignored their advice to change my Islamic attire so that I would be less conspicuous. I dressed like I always did, knowing that whatever happened to me I would have only myself to blame. But I was ready to just let fate take its course.

If this is a manifestation of strength, it's really insignificant compared to what a 23-year-old American peace activist recently went through. Rachel Corrie was crushed by a bulldozer when she tried to stop the demolition of some homes in the Gaza strip in Palestine. Her act made me wonder if I am doing anything to help disadvantaged Muslims. Rachel Corrie, who was not a Muslim, went to the battle front and faced the issue head on.

We live in a world that can be cruel. So much data, technological advances and opportunities can make young Muslims confused. Islam, which is not a static religion, serves to inspire and guide the faithful. We make our choices for Islam believes in free will.

Learning Islam is a life-time commitment. So we need to read, read and read.

One Islamic saying advises everyone to "seek knowledge even if it be as far as China." It doesn't say that one must seek only Islamic or Arabic learning. Western or secular education is important too.

In Oxford, there is a lively mix of cultures. I have met Chinese, Middle Eastern and, of course, English students. Various associations encourage lively discussions. A week before the war in Iraq, some high school students marched in protest against the war.

One weekend, I attended a *maulid* (Islamic session of recitations) in a Malaysian couple's residence. People of all colors were sitting in a circle, sharing food and experiences. A British lady offered to introduce me to a Filipina Muslim nurse.

I remember Dr. Nizami of the Oxford Center for Islamic Studies saying that identity is important even in this age of globalization. Despite modernity, people still need to know who they are.

I also remember someone saying that to be a good Muslim, one has to make the other a good Christian. Some of us may eat and dress in Western way, but our beliefs are our own.

As I learn more, I realize that it is in celebrating differences among peoples that conflicts can be solved or avoided. It is not only Muslims who have the capacity to do the right thing. As Rachel Corrie showed, principles based on a humane and just society cut across cultures and religions.

Samira Gutoc, 28, is a visiting fellow at the Oxford University Center for Islamic Studies.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO . . .?

Battle over Unitrust

ON JUNE 5, 2002, former Unitrust Development Bank president Francis Yuseco Jr., together with lawyers Leopoldo Varcarcel, Wilfredo Cuneta and Pedro Montanez, and Kensuke Inoue, was charged with estafa before the sala of the Makati RTC Judge Oscar Pimentel.

The case stemmed from a complaint filed by Genta Ogami, the Japanese chairman of G. Cosmos Philippines Inc. Ogami said he owned Unitrust.

Prosecutors said Ogami had authorized the accused to purchase a bank. The accused then told him he could purchase Unitrust for P220.76 million in cash and a refundable show money of P285.18 million when in fact the actual selling price was P505.94 million. They also told him the purchase was valid under Philippine law if Ogami would use the name of his two Japanese corporations to own 40 percent equity and assign 20 percent each to Yuseco, Varcarcel and Montanez, who would hold the shares in trust with the obligation to return them to him. After the purchase, the accused did not comply with the terms of agreement and misappropriated for their own benefit the 60 percent equity.

In September 2003, the public prosecutors assigned to the case sought to withdraw the information. During the hearing on the motion, lawyer Fred Gutierrez, who claimed to represent Ogami, appeared. The court, however, ordered him to present within 15 days pertinent documents supporting his claim. The period lapsed but he was not able to comply with the order.

On Oct. 4, a woman appeared in court claiming to be Ogami's wife. She said Ogami was in jail in Japan. She asked permission to secure certified copies of the entire case records which would be used by Ogami in his defense in a case in Japan. The court allowed it after she presented proof of her marriage to Ogami. The court also instructed her to inform it of Ogami's stand on the motion to withdraw information. The woman never came back.

Case status: The court granted the motion to withdraw information on Oct. 25, 2002. In his decision, Pimentel said: "Ogami is in Japan and under arrest and therefore, the probability that he maybe able to testify is remote. If ever the motion to withdraw information is granted, it would still favor the complainant. Thus, it would be best to allow withdrawal of the information."

Armin Adina, PDI Research Department

LETTERS PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Nara will help gov't raise tax collection

WE have been following developments regarding the National Authority for Revenue Administration (Nara) bill. As we understand it, House Bill No. 5465 is intended to reform the country's tax collection agency by abolishing the Bureau of Internal Revenue and creating a new agency. Now it seems that approval of the bill has been stalled.

A newspaper article last March 18 said that the BIR commissioner prefers to absorb everyone into the new agency. We think that a rigid screening ought to be conducted instead so that only those who really deserve will be retained.

In another newspaper article, Sen. Ralph Recto was quoted as saying that the Nara bill is not necessary and will most likely not make it through the Senate. On the contrary, we believe this bill should be enacted into law.

In managing budgets, whether that of a family or a business or a government, one needs to balance expenses and revenues. It is good that our legislators apparently want our government to live within its means. But there is enough evidence to show that the government is not getting what it should by way of taxes.

We ask our leaders, legislators and the President to enact the Nara bill into law so that we can improve the collection of revenue.

—**ISABELO R. CASTRO, president, Class '42, Philippine Military Academy**

'Gateway to Paradise' is in Mindoro Oriental

I WRITE to correct the error in the news item, titled "GMA launches new land-sea route to Visayas, Mindanao." (PDI, April 1, 2003).

It said that from Calapan City, the presidential caravan would go to Roxas City by land and from there board another boat to Caticlan from where it would proceed to Iloilo and Mindanao.

The jump-off point from Mindoro Island to Caticlan in Panay is not Roxas City, which is in Capiz, but Roxas, Oriental Mindoro, a fast-growing town in southern Mindoro which prides itself as the "Gateway to Paradise" (meaning Boracay) and the Trade Center of Southern Mindoro. Among the towns in the southern tip of Mindoro, Roxas is now gaining the reputation of being the most peaceful and prosperous community.

On the other hand, the picture showing President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo bidding farewell to the people of "Roxas City" was actually taken during a send-off by the people of Roxas, Oriental Mindoro, while the vessel was docked at the newly renovated pier in Dangay, Roxas, Oriental Mindoro.

—**ANTONIO M. ROSALES, RTC presiding judge, Roxas, Oriental Mindoro**

Needed: local law against torture

ONE OF THE high points of the 1987 Constitution is the provision which prohibits torture and the use of cruel, degrading and inhuman treatment against detainees. The Philippine government has also signed the UN Convention Against Torture. But sad to say, we have no domestic law which prohibits torture and punishes the perpetrators.

Because of this, I strongly appeal to our legislators to enact an anti-torture law. Senators Francis Pangilinan and Sergio Osmeña and Rep. Etta Rosales have drafted bills outlawing torture. I hope these will be acted upon by our legislators.

—**RAFFY REY OLITO, regional coordinator, TFDP-Northern Luzon, Luy Wing Bldg, Magsaysay Ave., Baguio City**

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Manila - Roxas v.v.	2,099	1,999	5%
Manila - Kalibo v.v.	2,569	2,099	18%
Davao - Zamboanga v.v.	2,319	1,999	14%

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Two funerals, two epidemics

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

TWO funerals, both involving Filipinos but held thousands of miles apart, remind us that we face the threat of two major epidemics. The first is that of SARS, while the second, well, you'll figure out as you go on reading.

The first funeral took place in Toronto, Canada, early in April. The deceased was an elderly Filipino who was admitted to Scarborough Grace, a hospital in Toronto, on March 16 and who eventually died on April 1 in another hospital. Although Toronto had been gripped by SARS for several weeks, doctors did not realize the old man had the disease until April 3, suspecting SARS only after the old man's son, and several members of his extended family, began to show symptoms of the disease.

Public health officials began to probe and found out the old man was a member of Bukas-Loob sa Diyos (BLD), a Catholic charismatic group, whose members had visited the funeral home where the old man's remains were. Public health officials issued a public warning advising anyone who had been to the wake to contact health officials and to quarantine themselves. Health authorities also informed the religious group's leaders, who then canceled their prayer meetings for the whole month of April. With that done, public health officials became complacent, thinking they had done what was needed to prevent the old man's infection from spreading.

But on April 9, two more BLD members were diagnosed with SARS. Health officials were stumped because both patients had not been to the wake of the old man. The medical detectives had to go to work again and realized that exposure to SARS could have occurred earlier, particularly at a BLD-organized Mass and retreat on March 28 and 29, with some 500 members attending. The public health officials also realized BLD's social networks involved more than religious activities. For example, they found out that on the very day BLD cancelled its prayer meetings, many of them attended the 50th birthday party of one of their members.

The outbreak within the BLD is ominous, suggesting what could happen once SARS arrives in the Philippines. SARS could spread quickly for two reasons. First, we have populations as densely packed as Hong Kong's, the physical proximity allowing the SARS virus to rapidly move around. Second, the outbreak among Filipinos in Canada tells us that even if people do not live closely together, as is the case in Canada, the close and intertwining social networks of Filipinos will still facilitate the spread of the virus.

As Canadian public health officials realized, Filipino social groups have many overlapping social functions. A religious group functions not just for prayer meetings, Masses and retreats but also for the celebration of birthdays, for wakes and funerals, and I am sure, for visiting the sick.

With social networks like ours, people could end up having multiple exposures, making it a nightmare for public health officials trying to track and control an epidemic. In Toronto, following the outbreak within BLD, officials had to put 600 people under quarantine.

Let's turn now to the other funeral. This one took place last Holy Thursday in a town in northern Luzon. (The names of the town and province have been mentioned in print and in broadcast media but I think they've taken enough of a battering for now, so let me just omit the names.)

The deceased was a middle-aged Filipina who had worked as a nursing aide in Canada. She fell ill shortly after arriving in her hometown, and was rushed to a local hospital. Suspecting SARS, hospital personnel referred the patient to San Lazaro in Manila. The nursing aide died there and although the Department of Health had an initial diagnosis of bronchopneumonia, they ordered her casket sealed and that she be buried right away.

The TV networks caught the funeral and I have to say it was one of the most heart-rending scenes I have ever seen, with the mother of the nursing aide accompanying the funeral cortege, wailing and begging to see her daughter one last time. Apparently, she was not able to get one last glimpse because of the strict DOH orders.

Earlier, news broadcasts interviewed family members, who said their neighbors were avoiding their home. Some of the relatives complained, too, that they had difficulty getting an ambulance, with town officials expressing fears that the nursing aide would infect others with SARS.

We are witnessing paradoxical links between SARS and Philippine society. On one hand, we are vulnerable to SARS because we are terribly social creatures. On the other hand, when prejudice takes over we can be quick to abandon even relatives, friends, neighbors.

When SARS does enter the country, we will have to confront a serious social dilemma. On one hand, we will have to convince people that caring for a SARS patient may require strict quarantine. Singapore's hospitals are limiting visits to one designated relative for each SARS patient, a policy which could be very difficult to implement in the Philippines, where entire clans will camp in a hospital to watch over a relative.

On the other hand, we will have to control the impulse to move to the other extreme of socially isolating SARS patients and their families. When SARS strikes, we will find that cooperation will be important. In Hong Kong city officials have mobilized thousands of their residents to clean up the city, in an attempt to cut down SARS transmission. We may need similar social mobilization campaigns for health education and caring for patients and families.

Responding to SARS will involve more than virus control. We need to make sure that in the end, we are not consumed by the other epidemic, the epidemic of fear.

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Ex-US general takes command of Baghdad

BAGHDAD—The retired US general overseeing Iraqi reconstruction arrived in Baghdad on Monday, saying his priority was to restore essential services, as debate intensified over Washington's postwar role.

Jay Garner flew to Baghdad from Kuwait and went straight to work, visiting a city hospital, after the capture of two more associates of Saddam Hussein wanted by Washington.

Garner, starting a four-day tour of Iraq, also planned to visit water and power plants in the capital.

"What better day in your life can you have than to be able to help somebody else, to help other people, and that is what we intend to do," Garner told reporters at Baghdad airport.

He said his priority was to restore basic services such as water and electricity "as soon as we can." Asked what the greatest challenge was, he said: "Everything is the challenge."

It was not clear whether he would meet Iraqi National Congress head Ahmad Chalabi, thought to be Washington's favored candidate to lead Iraq.

On Sunday, US-led forces announced they had seized Saddam's science minister, while a leading Iraqi opposition group said Saddam's sole surviving son-in-law had surrendered to them, bringing to seven the number of "most wanted" Iraqis in US and opposition hands.

Those detentions came amid debate over how long and in what capacity the United States would remain in Iraq and what role the United Nations would play.

EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana took a swipe at the United States in a newspaper interview on Sunday, saying it should use its clout to form consensus among its allies rather than impose its will by force. Solana also renewed calls for a major UN role in Iraq.

The United States, snubbed by the UN Security Council when it sought approval to invade Iraq, has acknowledged the United Nations has a role to play.

US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage told the Al Khaleej and Gulf Today newspapers that the United States would "work together with the UN to figure out what the appropriate role is."

Garner said his aim was to get his job done and leave as soon as possible, but he would not be drawn when asked if the work could be completed in 90 days.

"I wouldn't put 90 days as a mark on the wall. We will be here as long as it takes. We will leave fairly rapidly," he said.

Chalabi told ABC television's "This Week" program on Sunday US forces should stay in Iraq until it holds elections.

"The military presence of the United States in Iraq is a necessity until at least the first democratic election is held, and I think this process should take two years," he said.

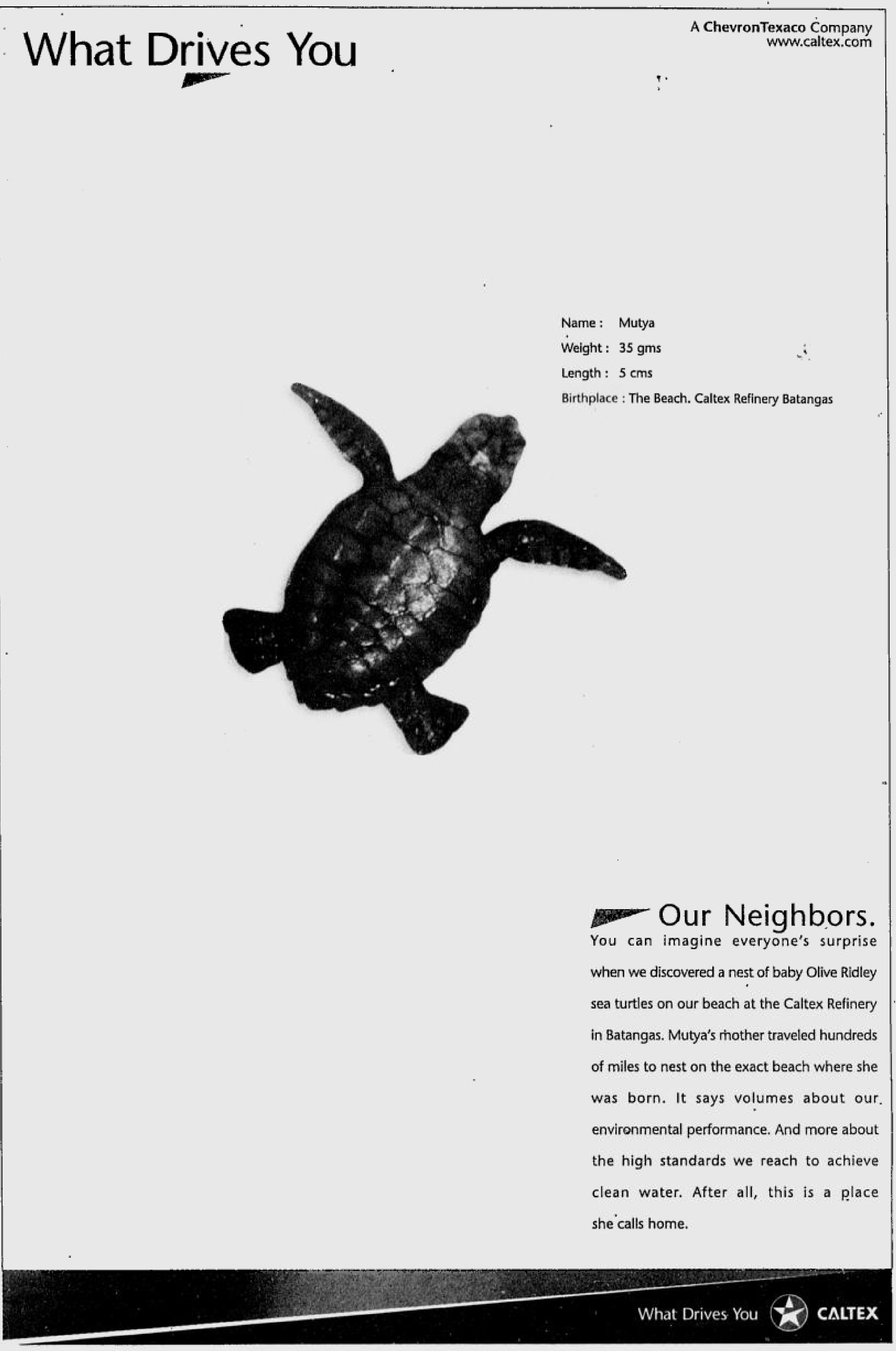
Garner heads the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance, which was set up to help rebuild the country and prepare for an Iraqi interim government.

Iraqis have criticized US-led forces for failing to restore order, power and water to cities after the invasion that toppled Saddam.

Garner's initial team of about 19 civilian administrators will swell to around 450 over the next week. He will report to Gen. Tommy Franks, the commander of US forces in Iraq, who paid a brief visit to Baghdad on Wednesday.

Abdul-Khaleq Abdul-Ghafur, Saddam's minister of higher education and scientific research and number 43 on the US list of 55 most wanted Iraqis, was taken into custody on Saturday, a US central command statement said.

The Iraqi National Congress said Jamal Mustafa Sultan al-Tikriti, number 40 on the 55 most wanted list, returned from Syria to surrender and would be handed to US forces. *Reuters*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Birthplace : The Beach. Caltex Refinery Batangas

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What Drives You CALTEX

Kalashnikov rifle sells for $30 in Baghdad

BAGHDAD—At the Meridi market, a Kalashnikov rifle costs 30 bucks and a cartridge runs under a dollar. With security still tenuous in Baghdad, arms dealers are openly peddling their lethal ware in Baghdad's Shiite shantytown of Sadr City.

Jalil Jurani thinks he has found a good enough deal: an AK-47 made in the former Yugoslavia for 95,000 dinars, around $32 and a fortune in a country ravaged by two decades of war and economic sanctions.

Before putting down his cash, Jurani requests to test out his investment. He fires a few rounds in the air, drawing not a bit of attention from the dozens of other customers at the arms bazaar.

"I live in the Jamila neighborhood and our house was often hit at night by fire from the Saddam Fedayeen," a militant volunteer corps of the fallen regime, Jurani says.

"The Fedayeen are still hiding. I'm obliged to protect my family and I can't consider just the price," says the 34-year-old, a laborer who has been out of work since US troops routed Saddam Hussein's forces from Baghdad on April 9.

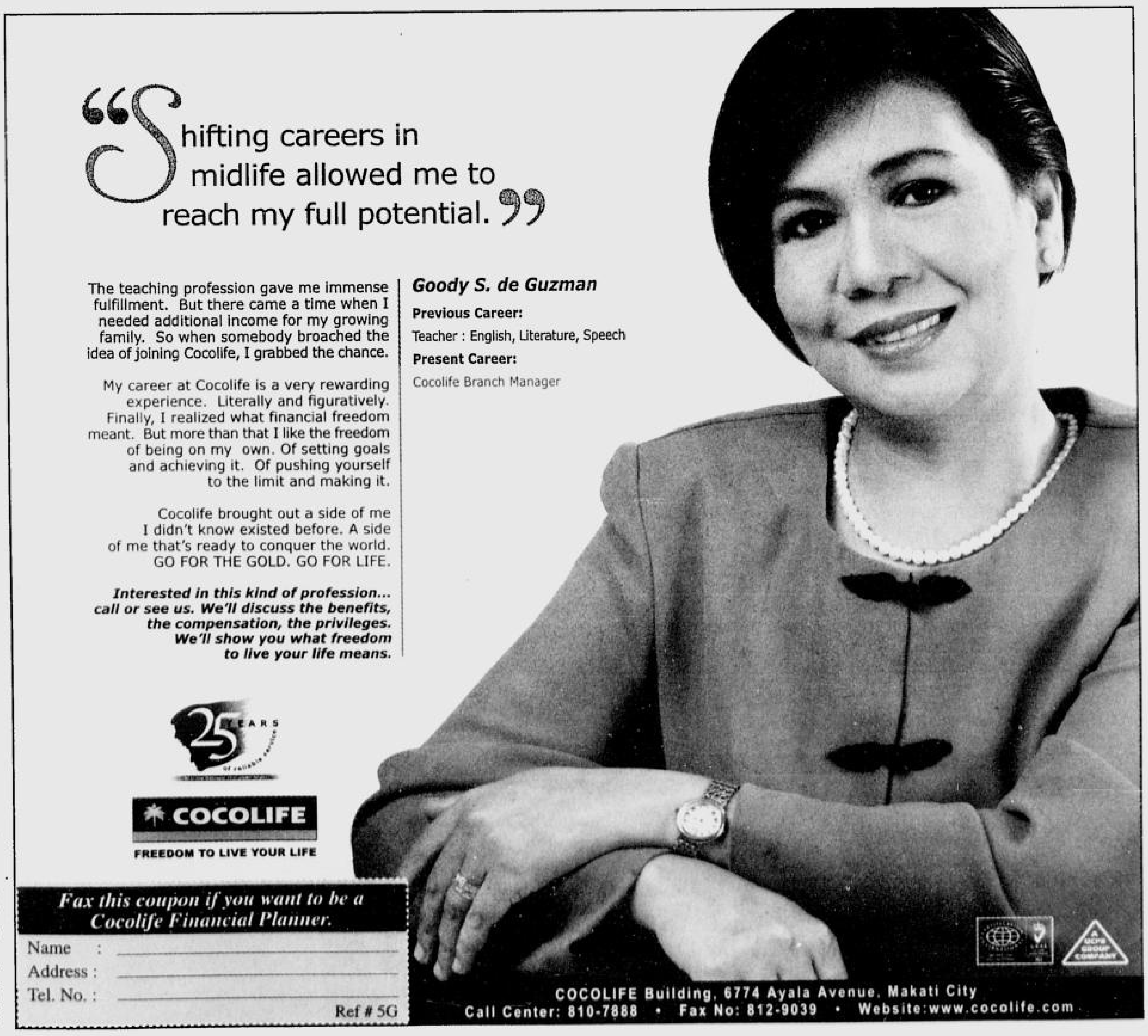
The Meridi market, with its dusty stands and rundown stalls, has long been a shopper's haven in Baghdad, but under Saddam's authoritarian state weapons were never for the buying, residents say.

The police used to conduct frequent raids on the market, seizing illegal products and stolen goods. But the police disappeared with Saddam, and now weapons by the crate can be found right on the pavement.

With so much to choose from, some weapons sell better than others. Two Egyptian-made Port Said machine guns, with long black barrels, attract little interest, to the dismay of the teenage boy peddling them.

Instead, nearly everyone prefers light arms. The best sellers are pistols, followed by AK-47s, which many already know how to fire as they were used by the Iraqi Army.

In the free-for-all that followed the regime's collapse, full Army depots were looted by mobs, while some soldiers returned home with guns they never used once. *AFP*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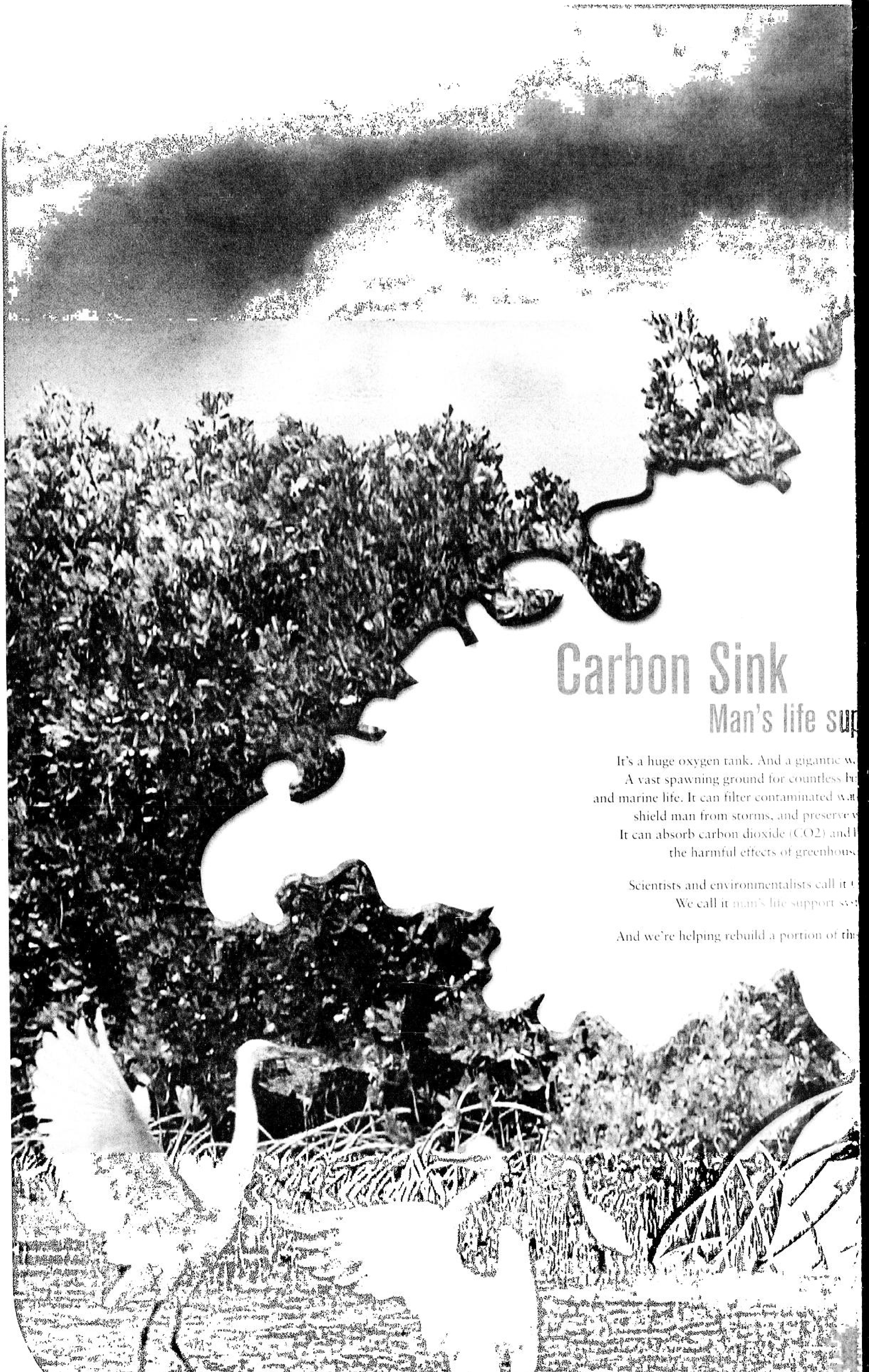

Carbon Sink

Man's life su

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the harmful effects of greenhous

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INITIATIVE

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This undertaking, which we are launching today, April 22, has three components: restoration of 150 hectares of mangrove forest in Pagbilao (classified as the world's second most diverse mangrove ecosystem); rehabilitation of 150 hectares of upland forest; and establishment of a 145-hectare Mangrove Eco-Destination Site. This site could serve as the country's future 'mangrove seedling bank' with its 48 mangrove species and a major eco-destination center for research and education.

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Beyond Today, Beyond Energy

‘Combat-ready’ N. Korea set for nuclear talks

SEOUL—South Korean officials said Monday they expected the United States to show up in Beijing this week for the first talks with North Korea since the nuclear crisis erupted six months ago.

The talks were thrown into doubt after Pyongyang angered Washington by indicating that it had begun, or was about to begin, reprocessing spent nuclear fuel rods to make weapons-grade plutonium.

Despite the announcement, US President George W. Bush said Sunday that the United States, Japan, South Korea and China together had a “a good chance” of convincing North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons program.

Washington believes North Korea already has one or two bombs and could quickly produce several more through reprocessing.

Bush’s sunny rhetoric was countered Monday by more sabre-rattling from North Korea, which called on its people to get “combat ready” and prepare to annihilate US invaders.

China is poised to host three-way negotiations in Beijing tentatively set to open Wednesday. A senior South Korean government official said the talks would go ahead as announced.

“The trilateral meeting will go ahead as planned,” the official said on condition of anonymity.

South Korea President Roh Moo-Hyun’s foreign press spokesperson Lee Jihyun also said she had heard no reports that the talks had been cancelled.

“As far as I know the talks will go ahead,” she said.

In his upbeat assessment of a volatile situation, Bush singled out China for praise, saying Beijing was now committed to help resolve the nuclear crisis.

“Now that they’re engaged in the process it makes it more likely that’s going to occur,” said Bush, who has refused allied appeals for one-on-one talks between Washington and Pyongyang.

“The key thing on the North Korea agenda is China is assuming a very important responsibility” and acting on former president Jiang Zemin’s pledge to work to keep the Korean peninsula free of nuclear arms, the US leader said.

If the talks go ahead, they would see US and North Korean negotiators sit down at the same table for the first time since the nuclear crisis erupted in October of last year.

Experts said there were contradictions in reports carried by the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) on Friday about the spent fuel rods from the North’s Yongbyon nuclear plant.

An English-language KCNA report Friday quoted a North Korean foreign ministry spokesperson as saying Pyongyang was “successfully reprocessing” more than 8,000 spent fuel rods.

The Korean-language version monitored in Seoul said the process had reached “the point of reprocessing.”

US and South Korean officials said that based on a review of the different versions, North Korea may not yet have begun reprocessing the fuel rods.

Both the English and Korean versions, however, agreed that the talks would be essentially bilateral in nature, with China’s role reduced to that of genial host.

South Korea, upset at being sidelined from the nuclear talks, agreed Monday to separate cabinet-level talks with North Korea in Pyongyang from April 27 to 29.

The North’s offer came on Saturday after Pyongyang called for rice and fertilizer aid from South Korea, breaking a month-long freeze in official inter-Korean contact.

South Korean officials said that at talks, Seoul would raise concerns about North Korea’s nuclear program.

For the past six months, Pyongyang has escalated the crisis over its nuclear ambitions, expelling UN inspectors, restarting a plutonium-producing reactor and pulling out of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. *AFP*

Bush says Syria begins to get US message, softens rhetoric

FORT HOOD, Texas—US President George W. Bush softened his rhetoric against Syria on Sunday, as two US lawmakers left a meeting with President Basher al-Assad in Damascus saying they had assurances that Iraq’s neighbor would not harbor fleeing war criminals.

“I’m confident the Syrian government has heard us, and I believe it when they say they want to cooperate with us,” Bush said as he left an Easter Sunday church service at this Texas army base.

“Seems like they’re beginning to get the message. And when we think there’s somebody there... we, of course, will pass on the name and fully expect the Syrian government to hand the person over,” Bush said.

The United States has ratcheted up pressure on Syria in recent weeks, accusing Damascus of possessing chemical weapons, smuggling military equipment into Iraq and providing a safe haven for associates of former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

Syria denies the charges and awaits a possible visit by US Secretary of State Colin Powell to discuss them.

In Damascus, visiting US lawmakers said Assad had assured them that Syria would not shelter any Iraqi officials wanted for war crimes.

“We spoke with Assad on a number of issues in regard to what the US has been alleging,” Democrat Representative Nick Rahall of West Virginia said.

“Mr. Assad told us that the Syrians will not provide asylum for any war criminals.”

“Assad said that he is working with the British and other friends of the USA to resolve these issues,” added Rahall, who was to stay on in Syria until Monday.

Issa told ABC television’s “This Week” program that “we got a specific commitment that he will not harbor any war criminals, and he will expel any that get into the country.”

“We’re conveying that back to the United States, and hopefully we can count on him to enforce that promise,” the California congressman said.

Rahall cautioned against equating Syria and Iraq.

“Syria has helped the United States in our fight against al-Qaeda,” he said, adding that President Assad, “is not the same as Saddam Hussein in Iraq and any perception, any trying to package Syria and Iraq together is not a correct understanding of the issue.

“Syria is not America’s enemy,” Rahall said.

Issa said they also asked Syria’s government to close the office of Islamic militants in Damascus, including those of Hezbollah, Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

“Although the official position of the government is these are information only, we still reiterated that the right message would be to close these offices,” Issa said.

The two also asked Assad to encourage Lebanon to deploy its own army forces along its border with Israel, instead of allowing Hezbollah militia there, Issa said.

Issa told Fox News Sunday that Assad denied receiving weapons of mass destruction from Iraq, but “they don’t formally deny that they have a program of their own.” *AFP*

CHINA’S FAIREST

Twenty-four-year-old Wu Wei, from China’s eastern Fujian province, shows off her trophy after winning the Miss China/Universe crown in Jinan, northeastern China’s Shandong province, April 20. Wu beat some 3,000 contestants from throughout the country for the chance to represent China in the Miss Universe finals to be held in Panama later this year. AFP

Serbia deals hard blow to mobsters

BELGRADE—Little more than a month after the assassination of Serbian prime minister Zoran Djindjic the authorities in Belgrade have achieved what they failed to do in two years: deal a blow to the mafia that hits at the very heart of the organization.

Since March 12, when Djindjic was shot dead outside a Serbian government building allegedly by members of the Serbian underworld, investigators have questioned some 10,000 people, about 3,000 of whom are still being held.

Charges were brought against several hundred people, and their trials should begin in the coming months.

This unprecedented operation, carried out under the terms of a state of emergency declared by the government shortly after Djindjic’s murder, has been aimed at members of the mafia and at individuals with close ties to organized crime groups.

And it has spared no one. According to the local press, a number of mafia bosses—estimated at 150 in Serbia—but also policemen, prosecutors, judges, lawyers, army officials, politicians and former senior officials are all now behind bars.

Among those arrested is former army chief-of-staff General Nebojsa Pavkovic, former secret police chief Jovica Stanisic and several commanders of the “Red Berets,” the elite Unit for Special Operations (JSO) to which Djindjic’s alleged assassin is thought to have belonged.

The unit has since been disbanded by the government. *AFP*

Britons can now watch ‘Millionaire’ bets cheat way to jackpot

LONDON—Britons will finally get the chance on Monday to see a British army major, his wife and a college lecturer cheating their way to the jackpot on the worldwide hit TV quiz show “Who Wants to be a Millionaire?”.

Major Charles Ingram and his wife Diana were found guilty earlier this month of hatching a plan to use a system of coded coughs from lecturer Tecwen Whittock to win the million pound ($1.58 million) top prize.

The bizarre story and trial gripped the country for months but the episode on which Ingram “won,” recorded in September 2001, has never been broadcast.

Commercial channel ITV1, which broadcasts “Millionaire,” said it would air a feature-length documentary on Monday about the cheats along with the unseen footage from the show.

Detectives said Diana Ingram had set up the scam, speaking frequently to Whittock before the show and on the night between Ingram’s two appearances for the show’s filming.

Ingram, who served in Bosnia with the British army’s Royal Engineers, then thrilled the 300 people in the audience as he battled through 15 general knowledge questions to the jackpot, despite often appearing baffled.

Each question comes with four possible answers and Ingram would ponder aloud before making a final decision. It was during this time that the coughs from Whittock were heard.

For example, on the million-pound question—the correct name for the number 1 followed by 100 zeros—he mused: “I think it is a nanomole but it could be a gigabite... I don’t think I have heard of a googol.”

As he mentioned googol, the cough was heard and Ingram chose it as the right answer.

The audience erupted in cheers, with the show’s host Chris Tarrant telling him: “You are the most amazing contestant we have ever had. I am so proud of you.”

But the plan was rumbled when sound staff alerted police after noticing an unusual amount of coughing coming from Whittock’s direction.

The trio have protested their innocence. However, they were found guilty, and the Ingrams were fined 15,000 pounds each and given 18-month jail terms, suspended for two years. Whittock was fined 10,000 pounds and given a 12-month suspended jail sentence. *Reuters*

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Lipa	(043) 757-0235	Iloilo	(033) 320-7488	Iligan	(063) 221-3713
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Obasanjo takes lead in Nigeria election

OBASANJO

ABUJA—President Olusegun Obasanjo took a strong lead on Monday in elections in Nigeria, Africa’s most populous state and a major oil exporter, but the opposition alleged widespread voter fraud.

Obasanjo’s PDP party won parliamentary elections on April 12 and its sweeping victories have startled many Nigerians and stoked fears of opposition-led unrest.

Results from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) gave Obasanjo 66 percent, with about a third of the vote counted. Main challenger Muhammudu Buhari, whose bastion is in the predominantly Muslim north, was second with 29 percent.

Nigeria, the world’s eighth biggest oil exporter, has spent most of its 43 years since independence from Britain under military rule. It is trying to successfully transfer power from one elected government to another for the first time.

Buhari’s All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) and other opposition parties dismissed the result of the presidential poll and a simultaneous ballot for state governors as a charade.

“This is a very huge joke” Sam Nda-Isaiah, spokesperson for the Buhari campaign, said, alleging widespread fraud.

Buhari had earlier rejected the outcome of the parliamentary vote and threatened to launch "mass action" if the voting for president and 36 state governors was rigged.

Voting was generally peaceful in large cities, but some losing candidates for governorships were enraged.

“It was a robbery, but unfortunately they have stolen Holy Ghost fire and it will burn them,” said Ugo Agballa, of the All Progressive Grand Alliance, who came second to the PDP in Enugu state.

Foreign election observers questioned an official turnout of nearly 100 percent in the southern oil-rich Rivers state where the opposition had called a boycott.

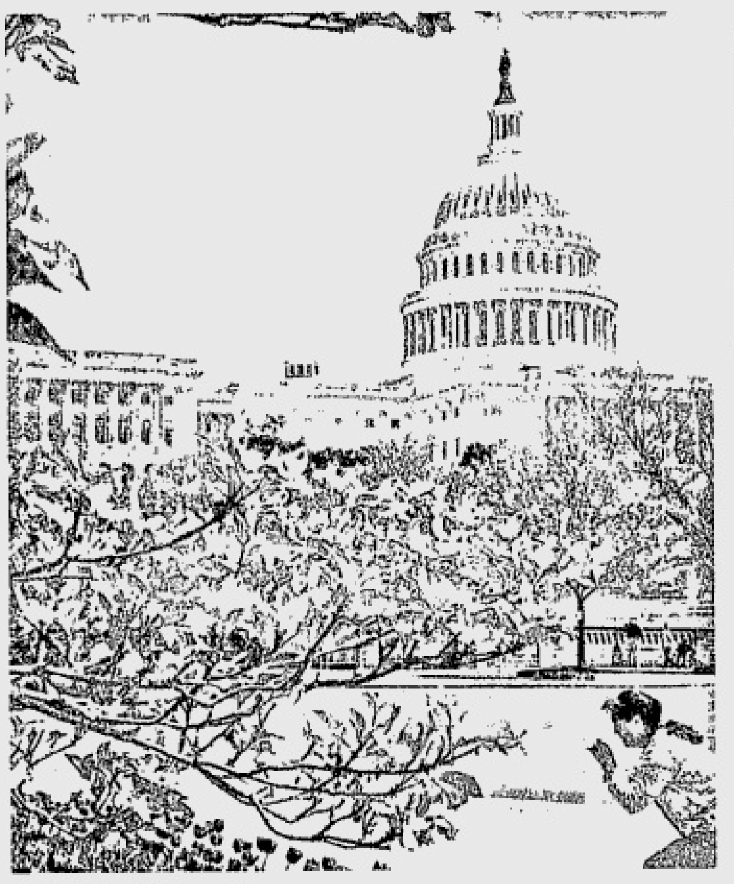
“We have significant concerns about what has happened this weekend (in Rivers),” Stuart Mole, a Commonwealth observer in the state capital Port Harcourt, said.

Government supporters and public broadcasters portrayed the elections as broadly free and fair and a step towards real democracy.

But the result in Rivers was widely challenged because it did not reflect a boycott called by opposition parties in parts of the oil-producing Niger Delta region.

The INEC’s Port Harcourt office reported a 96 percent turnout in the governorship race by the 2.2 million registered voters in the state. Peter Odili of Obasanjo’s Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) was returned by a crushing majority.

Obasanjo and Buhari are both former military rulers in the West African state of more than 120 million people. *Reuters*



WASHINGTON SPRING
A tourist photographs tulips outside the US Capitol building in Washington, DC on April 20. Tourists and locals alike thronged to see the spring blossoms. AFP

Kosovo still boils with hatred

PRISTINA, Serbia and Montenegro—Almost four years after the United Nations established its mission in Kosovo, inter-ethnic hostility is still widespread and the few Serbs remaining in the capital Pristina are afraid to circulate freely in the city.

Surrounded by the ethnic Albanian majority, many of whom would like to see them thrown out of Kosovo, the Serbs in Pristina are pessimistic about their future.

Some 45,000 Serbs lived in the Kosovo capital, which was home to some 125,000 people before the 1998-99 war in the southern Serbian province. The war ended with the withdrawal of Belgrade forces under pressure of a Nato bombing campaign.

Since 1999, the population of Pristina has increased to more than 500,000, but only around 200 of them are Serbs.

The Pristina Serbs, grouped for security reasons in one building in the city's Ulpiana district, have been exposed to numerous insults, while often pelted with stones from windows of neighboring buildings.

"The psychological pressure is enormous. Our life is worse than in a prison," one of them, Jelena, told AFP.

Jelena, who refused to give her last name, said daily life has gotten worse since members of the Nato-led peacekeeping force (KFOR), deployed throughout the province since 1999, left the neighborhood last October.

The removal of many checkpoints was ordered by UN administrator Michael Steiner, who believed that the security situation has improved sufficiently.

The checkpoints in the nearby Serb enclaves have disappeared, but KFOR has also increased its patrols in return.

However, without the permanent presence of KFOR troops, Serbs in Ulpiana today feel almost abandoned.

"Steiner's opinion was based on statistics that the tension between the communities has been significantly reduced, but he is not the one living with it every day, as we do," Milan said.

The Serb families in the neighborhood have only one shop, poorly supplied, without fresh vegetables and fruit. The goods are brought to the shop by a tiny UN van coming from the Serb enclave of Gracanica, near Pristina.

"The UN (officials) believe w can go shopping by public bus es, but this is absurd, as w would all be beaten up," Tanj said.

Serbs have also given up driv ing or even having private car: There is no access for them to th parking lot in front of their build ing, while their cars in the pas have often been damaged by A banian extremists.

Around 20 Serb pupils ar still escorted by KFOR soldie to the school in a Serb villag some 20 kilometers from Prist na.

The community's resources a very low. Only 15 of them are en ployed. They receive financi support from Belgrade, but co sider it insufficient. Sometime they can find a temporary job, b for the lowest wages. AF

Israeli forces kill 5 Palestinians, wound 10 in Gaza refugee camp raid

GAZA—The Israeli army killed five Palestinians and wounded around 70, many of them civilians, in a raid on the Rafah refugee camp in the Gaza Strip, Palestinian witnesses and medics said on Sunday.

An Israeli military photographer was killed and three soldiers wounded during what an Israeli general described as intensive fighting with gunmen in the crowded warrens of the camp, a militant stronghold on the border with Egypt.

Near the West Bank city of Qalqilya, soldiers shot dead a Palestinian who threw a petrol bomb at them, witnesses said.

Rafah residents called the assault by a 40-vehicle armored force the most powerful Israeli push into the camp since a Palestinian uprising for statehood began 30 months ago.

The army mounted the operation amid Palestinian infighting over security powers prime minister-designate Mahmoud Abbas has been trying to wrest from President Yasser Arafat in setting up a new government to pursue reforms demanded by peace mediators.

Abbas, also known as Abu Mazen, walked out of cabinet-formation talks in the West Bank city of Ramallah on Saturday. He threatened to quit in the struggle with Arafat over who would run Palestinian security services.

The United States has sought to sideline Arafat, calling for democratic and anti-corruption reforms in his Palestinian Authority and a new leadership "not compromised by terror".

Once Abbas's new government is in place, US President George W. Bush has pledged to present a "road map" peace plan leading to the establishment of a Palestinian state by 2005.

Mark Sofer, an Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesperson, said Israel hoped formation of a new Palestinian leadership would lead to a swift resumption of negotiations. Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has pledged to meet Abbas once he takes office.

But commenting on the Rafah incursion, Palestinian cabinet minister Saeb Erekat told Reuters: "The Israeli attack and escalation is aimed at one thing: sabotaging the road map and the peace process."

Palestinian officials said efforts would continue on Sunday to resolve Abbas' differences with Arafat.

In the Rafah raid, Israeli forces found two 30-meter-deep tunnels used for smuggling weapons and explosives from Egypt and blew them up, the army said in a statement.

Eight houses—including the home of Mahmoud Abu Shmallah, the leader of the Islamic militant group Hamas in Rafah—were demolished, witnesses said.

Palestinian medics said two of the five Palestinians killed in the camp were civilian males aged 14 and 32, while the others were a militant, a policeman and an unidentified man. They said about 70 people, including women and children, were wounded.

Hamas flags covered four of the bodies and the flag of another militant group, Islamic Jihad, covered the fifth corpse at a Rafah funeral attended by thousands and punctuated by calls for revenge and "Death to Israel." Since the uprising began, at least 2,005 Palestinians and 733 Israelis have been killed.

After the troops pulled out, Hamas militants fired a makeshift Qassam rocket into the southern Israeli town of Sderot, touching off a small fire in an apartment building, where a woman was treated for smoke inhalation, police said.

Claiming the rocket attack, Hamas' armed wing issued a statement saying it would never "succumb to the forces of evil and aggression by stopping legitimate resistance against the sinful occupation."

Brigadier-General Gadi Shamni, commander of Israeli troops in the Gaza Strip, told Reuters most of the Palestinians shot by his forces in Rafah were gunmen and some of the civilian casualties might have been caused by crossfire.

In the West Bank city of Nablus on Saturday, Palestinian cameraman Nazih Darwazeh, 45, was shot dead by Israeli troops while filming a clash, Reuters journalists and other witnesses said. Television footage showed him wearing a bright yellow, sleeveless jacket marked "Press" as he worked. *Reuters*

Japan's first transsexual candidate runs in poll

TOKYO—An activist believed to be the first Japanese transsexual to run for public office has registered as a candidate in a local election in Tokyo.

Aya Kamikawa, 35, will run for a seat in a local assembly in Setagaya, one of Tokyo's 23 wards, in voting slated for April 27, the candidate and an election official said Sunday. In Setagaya, 72 candidates are vying for 52 seats.

Kamikawa was born a man but lives as a woman and is planning to have a sex-change operation, she told The Associated Press. She said she wanted to give a voice to transsexuals in Japan and raise awareness of problems they face in this conformity-conscious nation.

In a formal application to Setagaya's election commission Sunday, Kamikawa identified herself as a woman, though she is listed as a male in her family registry—a government record used in Japan when issuing official documents ranging from passports to marriage certificates.

Commission official Takehito Suzuki described that discrepancy as a first for a candidate in a Japanese election and said the ward accepted it after consulting with the central government.

Kamikawa said she thought her chances of winning were "not so bad." She said voters she met on the campaign trail appeared to accept her status, but that it was difficult to predict whether they would vote for her. *AP*

DENR earth day network WATER YEAR 2003

"Caring for the environment is everyone's responsibility. Let us join hands in saving Mother Earth."

Earth Day 2003: "Water for Life"

MESSAGE

Isang maka-kalikasang bati sa inyong lahat!

One day each year - on the 22nd of April - people from all walks of life, people from all races and religions, people from over 180 countries all over the world gather to celebrate the wonder that is *Mother Earth*.

We exchange information, we share experiences, and we educate each other in ways to preserve the one and only Earth we have.

It is very encouraging to see that Earth Day awareness in the Philippines has been expanding to the extent that even individual municipalities now have their own Earth Day celebrations. We should continue promoting this until every *barangay* in the country celebrates Earth Day.

However, even as we celebrate Earth Day only once a year, I call on each one of us to practice Earth Day every single day. We should actually do whatever we teach and whatever we learn during the Earth Day celebrations every day for the rest of each year.

This year, the (international) Earth Day Network is launching a *"Water for Life"* campaign, in conjunction with the United Nation's declaration of 2003 as the Year of Freshwater. It is hoped that this campaign will generate the political will and common resolve not only to protect the world's water resources but also to improve access to healthy water.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources joins the Filipino people, as well as the rest of the world, in celebrating Earth Day 2003. Let every day be Earth Day!

Elisea G. Gozun
Elisea G. Gozun
Secretary

BY PRESIDENT GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO

I join the citizens of the world in celebrating Earth Day today. People from all walks of life and all religions from 180 countries gather today to highlight the importance of caring for Mother Earth.

It is fitting that the theme for this year's celebration is, "Water for Life". Water is fundamental to the survival of all life on earth and is one of the most immediate threats to human health and development.

Water is the most widely occurring substance on earth. However, only less that 1.0% can be utilized for consumption since 97.5% of the earth's water is salt water and two-thirds of all freshwater is locked in glaciers and snow cover. Of the 6 billion people in the world today, about 1.2 billion lack access to potable drinking water and nearly 3 billion do not have access to adequate sanitation facilities. Almost half of the population of developing countries are exposed to polluted water sources. As a result, 80.0% of all diseases in developing nations are due to consumption and exposure to unsafe waters. Water-related diseases kill more than 5 million people each year.

In the Philippines, almost 10 million people have no sustainable source of potable drinking water. Almost 13 million Filipinos do not have access to any sanitation facilities. Our present water supply is estimated to cover only 72.0% of demand.

It is therefore critical for us to use wisely and conserve our water supply. More importantly, we need to take care of the very source of our water resources - our forests that act as our watersheds. Our water supply comes for the rivers and streams, our underground aquifers and our tress. Our forests also act as natural filters to ensure that we will have clean and clear waters. Forests do more than these. They also act as carbon sink, absorbing the harmful carbon dioxide and replacing it with oxygen, prevents soil erosion, flooding and the siltation of our rivers and costal seas. They also provide us with raw materials for most of our daily needs. However, nearly 90.0% of our watershed reservations are already considered degraded and 18 out of the 85 critical watersheds are in urgent need of immediate rehabilitation.

Let us therefore commit ourselves to saving our forests and protecting our water resources. Let us plant more trees. Let us not throw rubbish into our rivers system. Let us not discharge wastes and toxic substance into out bodies of water. For only then can we assure ourselves and our future generations of water security and a healthier environment.

For today's Earth Day, let us commit ourselves to sustainable development. Let us remind ourselves of our responsibilities to each other and to our future generations. Let us act together, for ordinary people acting together can achieve extraordinary things.

Mabuhay tayong lahat.

GMArroyo

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Cash prizes of P5,000; P3,000; P1,000 and 5 consolation prizes of P500 for each category of Household or Business tips will be given to lucky winners. Contest runs from April 14 to May 31, 2003. For details, please call the DENR Special Concerns Office (SCO) at: Tel. nos. 926-8089/927-6336/926-2637

CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY	VENUE
April 22	
Recyclables Collection Project & Solid Waste Mgt. Exhibit	Goldcrest Carpark, Ayala Center Mkt.City
Sagip-Batis Clean-Up Activity	fronting Phil.Heart Center, QC
Launching: Ecological Waste Center	QC
Symposium on Water Safety	QC
Marikina River Clean-Up	Marikina Riverbanks
Shoreline Clean-Up & Tree Planting	Muntinlupa City Quadrangle
Sagip Pasig Fluvial Parade	Pasig River
Tampisaw Festival River Clean-Up	Sibalom Natural Park, Iloilo
Mass Aerobics Exercise: "Hataw Para sa Kalikasan"	Marikina Riverbanks
Launching: Carbon Sink Program & Inauguration of Mangrove Experimental Station and Eco-Destination Area.	Brgy: Palsabangon, Pagbilao, Quezon
Launching: National Ecology Center	BFD Compound, Dil, Q.C.
Launching: National Ecology Center for NCR	EMB-NCR Compound, QC
On-the-Spot Poster–Making Contest	Quezon Memorial Circle, QC
Symposium on: (1) Freshwater & Its Significance; (2) Climate Change; (3) Livelihood Thru Recycling	Camp Aguinaldo, QC
Seminar/Forum: Fresh Water	ERDB Auditorium, Los Banos, Laguna
April 22-26	
Year 2003 Tamaraw Population Count	Mts. Iglit-Baco, National Park, Baco Oriental, Mindoro
April 22-27	
Youth Ecology Camp	Assumption Antipolo, Sumulong Highway, Antipolo, City
April 23	
Recyclable collection Project	Rockwell Mall, Makati City
Fun Run for Mother Earth	
Clean-Up of Ninoy Aquino Parks & Wildlife Nature Center	QC
On-the-Spot Poster–Making Contest	Marikina City Hall
Photo Art/Trade Fair of Indigenous- made products	NCIP D & E Bldg, Roces Ave,QC
Lecture/Forum: Ecological Solid Waste Management	NCIP
Lecture Series: (1) Biodiversity Conservation; (2) Climate Change; (3) Ecological Solid Waste Management	CSC Conference Room, QC
Lecture/Forum on: (1) Wetlands & Its Significance; (2) Ozone Layer; (3) Livelihood Thru Recycling	CHR Function Room, QC
Lecture/Forum on: (1) Freshwater & Its Significance; (2) Climate Change; (3) Ecological Solid Waste Management	Caloocan City Mayor's Office
April 24	
Earth Day Recyclables Collection	Rockwell Mall, Makati City
Tree Planting	Laguna Lake Area
Lecture–Demo; Livelihood Thru Recycling	Green Medows, White Plains QC
Video/Lecture: (1) Freshwater & Its Significance; (2) Climate Change	DTI
April 25	
Lecture. Waste Reduction Program: and Brgy Demo: Recyclable Materials	Camerino Compound, Marilag Proj. 4, QC
Album Launch: LLDA CD "A Lake Alive, Center A Lake For Life"	St. Francis Square, Ortigas
April 26	
Seminar for Chinese Chamber of Commerce on Environmental Laws	
April 27	
Bike Fest for the Environment	Bougainvilla Gazebo, Marikina Riverbanks
Kite Fest (Part IV Biyaheng Langit, Saranggolahan Festival)	Marikina Riverbanks
April 28-30	
Training Capability-Building on Cave Management	Ninoy Aquino Parks & Wildlife Center, QC
April 30	
Seminar. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) System for NHA	NHA, QC

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Across the NATION

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Fish kill hits Davao River

By Anthony S. Allada
PDI Mindanao Bureau

DAVAO CITY—Hundreds of arm-sized eels and other fish species were found floating at the Davao River here on Sunday morning, in what officials described as the worst fish kill in years.

City Councilor Isidro Ungab, chair of the Davao River Conservation Committee, said the fish kill started from the river's stretch at Km 13 in Barangay Tigatto in Buhangin District, where banana plantations are located, down to low-lying Bucana in Barangay 76-A.

Ungab said thousands of kilos of dead fish species, which also included *tilapia*, mudfish and catfish have died possibly caused by the irresponsibility of some agricultural companies operating near the area.

Ungab said an earlier study of the Davao River also yielded traces of lead in the water.

The INQUIRER learned that Lapanday Agricultural and Development Corp., a company owned by the family of Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo Jr. maintains at least 3,000 hectares of bananas in the area.

But Mandy Dinglasan, Lapanday Public Relations and External Affairs Manager, said it was unfair for anybody to blame the firm even as government agencies responsible for protecting the environment have yet to come up with the result of their investigation.

"You cannot issue a statement accusing anybody. There are many activities there aside from banana plantations. There was a similar incident in 1997 where (we) were blamed. Later, findings showed that we were not responsible for that fish kill," Dinglasan told the INQUIRER.

He said Lapanday was also conducting its own investigation on the incident.

A BOY looks for more dead fish in the Davao River. But officials warned that these eels, catfish and mudfish found floating in the river on Sunday morning could not be eaten. BING GONZALES/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

"We are very concerned because we have an operation in the area. We are one with the government in protecting the environment," he said.

The firm was voluntarily opening up the area as a sign of transparency in its operation, he said.

Davao City Water District forester Roddie .Mabanta said a test in the area revealed that the water had traces of pesticides.

Residents said they noticed a flow of sticky fluid in the river since Sunday morning.

They said as soon as the sticky liquid flowed, fishes started to surface belly up.

The Fertilizer and Pesticides Authority here also conducted a separate test of water samples taken from the Davao River.

But FPA regional director Ilominda Salting urged officials to wait for the results of the tests before coming out with statements.

"We have to be scientific to be accurate in our facts and data because we see many factors that cause the fish kill," she said.

Pollution, siltation and the lack of oxygen in the water could also trigger a fish kill aside from chemicals, Salting said.

Ungab urged residents not to feast on the dead fish saying these could be dangerous to humans.

4 Air Force men facing murder raps

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Four enlisted personnel of the Philippine Air Force based in the satellite airport of Buayan are facing murder charges after they were identified as responsible for the death of a seaman.

Two of the four suspects identified as Air Force 2nd Class Arnie Cabigon, 29, and Air Force 1st Class Omar Matthew Tauc, 28, were temporarily detained at the Pendatun Police Precinct No.1.

The two other suspects, Air Force 1st Class Ricky Catague and a certain Air Force Sgt. Perez remained at large.

The victim, Melchor Orofel, a resident of Gensanville Subdivision, was with some of his relatives drinking beer at Iloilo Arrozcaldo Hauz at around 2:30 a.m. on Wednesday.

Orofel's boisterous behavior reportedly irked the Air Force men.

The two groups traded hostile glances but nothing untoward happened.

The four Air Force men left the place and were waiting for a ride when Orofel allegedly followed and tried to throw stones at them.

However, one of the four suspects reportedly drew a gun and shot Orofel before he could hurl the stone.

The seaman was hit in his left armpit and died instantly.

The four suspects escaped on board a tricycle, but a man who witnessed the incident followed them on board another tricycle.

The witness reported the incident to the Lagao Police Precinct No. 3, which succeeded and arrested the two suspects.

The two others managed to escape.

During their interrogation, the duo denied any hand in the killing.

The two detained Air Force personnel later told the police it was Catague who shot Orofel.

The police filed a murder case against the four suspects on that same day.

Aquiles Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Makati Medical Center Receives Top Global Quality Recognition

TUV Suddeutchland, one of the largest bodies for certification and testing in the world recently awarded the country's premier medical institution—the Makati Medical Center (MMC)—with the prestigious ISO 9001:2000 (9K2K) quality certification.

This award comes close on the heels of Makati Medical receiving the Asian Hospital Management Awards 2002 with Best Customer Service Award and five runner-up prizes in Bangkok.

At special ceremonies celebrating the achievements, MMC President and Medical Director Raul G. Fores said: "I accept these awards on behalf of our patients. If our quality systems are adjudged worldclass, it is because we have dedicated staff who have made them so for our patients. Our commitment to charity work and the way we care for patients is what Makati Medical is all about. It's why we founded Makati Medical 35 years ago and we are gratified that we have made a contribution to health care to our community. The fact that our selection for the Asian Hospital Management Awards was made by an international gathering of experts and our upgraded ISO certification was made by one of the oldest and largest certifying bodies in the Asia-Pacific region makes these awards all more meaningful."

Presenting the ISO 9K2K certification was Dr. Ruprecht Schattner, president and CEO of TUV Suddeutchland Asia Pacific Group. "The ISO 9K2K is a difficult audit and I commend the staff of Makati Medical for their dedication to their patients' welfare. I see a happy staff in a caring work environment. I see the commitment of MMC management to Quality and that it has given its support all the way. I also note that the whole organization was involved in surmounting the challenges to make its systems conform to international standards."

Global Accreditation

There is only one standard for quality recognized all over the world—the International Standards developed by the International Organization for Standardadization (ISO), a worldwide federation of national standards associations from 130 countries that promotes the development of standardization in the world. An ISO certification is viewed as the final stamp of approval of a company's quality management and systems.

The new 9K2K audit has a much larger coverage and goes into greater depth than before. 9K2K not only covers all the medical departments, but also looks more into detail with regards to management responsibilities for preparing business plans and budgets, providing resources and community involvement. 9K2K also requires hospitals to have sufficient and meaningful performance indicators related to patient outcomes.

The result is that Makati Medical Center passed the new standards including the coverage of all the medical departments.

"Hospital with a Heart"

The Makati Medical Center was established by a group of dedicated medical professionals in the late '60s with a common vision to administer medical care of the highest order. Their guiding principle then as it is now:

Makati Medical Center believes that the primary concern of all employees is to respect rights of patients and meet their total needs with excellent service, dignity, courtesy and compassion.

The Director of MMC's quality program, Mr. Ashok Nath is quick to remind all that the race for quality is a race with a beginning but no end: "This does not mean we have arrived. All it means is that the quality revolution at MMC has taken off. There is a lot of work ahead."

Makati Medical Center is a 700-bed tertiary hospital considered as the country's premier hospital providing sophisticated medical and surgical facilities. MMC is a recognized leader in Philippine healthcare. The entire hospital management and staff are committed to delivering quality health care services.

TÜV MANAGEMENT SERVICE PRODUCT SERVICE ISO 9001

TUV Suddeutchland Asia Pacific president and CEO Dr. Ruprecht Schattner and TUV-Products Services general manager Ms Jocelyn delos Reyes present the certification to Dr. Raul G. Fores. "We first awarded MMC the ISO 9002 and EN46002 awards three years ago in December 2000 and have followed MMC's drive for excellence in patient care and we are very impressed," Dr. Schattner said.

Board members Dr. Ariston Bautista, Dr. Vicente Arguelles, Dr. Edmundo Villacorta and Jack Arroyo, Jocelyn delos Reyes, TUV-Products Services general manager; Dr. Raul G. Fores, president & medical director; board member Aurora Arnaez, and Dr. Ruprecht Schattner, president and CEO, Suddeutchland Asia Pacific. Advt.

Tobacco farmers advised to plant alternative crops

VIGAN CITY—Former Agriculture Secretary Salvador Escudero said tobacco farmers in the Ilocos should start considering alternative crops for areas where salinity has affected tobacco plants.

Escudero, a consultant tapped by tobacco magnate Lucio Tan to help address the problems of Virginia tobacco farmers in Ilocos Sur, said "salty" tobacco leaves were being rejected by cigarette manufacturing firms.

Escudero, who accompanied Fortune Tobacco Corp. chair Harry Tan, brother of Lucio, in a visit here last week, also warned of water shortage that might affect plantations and the quality of tobacco produced in the country.

Fortune Tobacco is the biggest buyer of Virginia tobacco grown in the Ilocos.

Escudero said the Philippines was one of 60 countries projected to suffer from a water crisis by 2025.

"We have to find solutions to the problems facing the tobacco industry or else we will be up for (the) worse," Ilocos Sur Gov. Deogracias Victor Savellano said in a press briefing here last week.

Savellano, Harry Tan, Escudero, Vice Gov. Jeremias Singson and officials of the National Tobacco Administration in the province met with local farmers to discuss the problems facing the industry.

Tan said his team came here on the request of his brother, who asked him to personally look into the problems.

Savellano also asked President Macapagal-Arroyo to help them address the problems.

"If not properly addressed now, we fear for the eventual death of our tobacco industry. Tobacco rejects are inevitable because we do not expect 100-percent good quality leaves. A certain percentage of (the) produce will be allotted for rejects. If these rejects will not be bought, tobacco farmers will be at the losing end," Savellano said in a letter to Ms Macapagal.

Tan, after a meeting with local officials, heeded the farmers' plea to buy their low-grade or "reject" tobacco.

But he said their price would be determined after the tobacco season next month.

Tan said 25 percent of tobacco leaves that they had bought from local farmers this year was salty or rejects.

"We have to focus on quality. Before, we can allow some rejects but we have to be strict now because of the increase in the volume of salty tobacco," Tan said in Filipino. *Leoncio Balbin Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

'Jueteng' persists in Bulacan towns

CAMP OLIVAS, Pampanga—Jueteng persists in 104 of 568 villages in Bulacan, a report from the Bulacan police said.

In a report here Monday, Bulacan police director Senior Supt. Felizardo Serapio identified the towns and cities as Angat, Bulacan, Plaridel, Pulilan, Malolos, Paombong, Pandi, San Miguel, San Rafael, Obando, Guiguinto, San Ildefonso, Bustos, Marilao, San Jose del Monte and Sta. Maria.

The report said jueteng was more widespread in San Rafael where the game is run in 24 of the town's 34 villages.

Paombong, Pandi and San Miguel have the biggest number of jueteng-affected villages at an average of 10 each.

Serapio said the report covered the period of April 13 to 20. He did not say if the number of jueteng-affected areas decreased or increased.

No police officials were relieved due to their failure to curb jueteng in their areas, he added.

A source in Camp Olivas said Serapio's estimates on the extent of jueteng operations in Bulacan were "far from reality."

The same report identified the jueteng operators and financiers as an alias Boy, Abet Viceo, Boy Viceo, Edwin Santos, Lito Somera, Fredo Galvez, Noni Viceo, Johny Mateo, Roberto Concepcion, Eugenio Reyes, Alfredo Abao and an alias Boy Vinas. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

ROUNDUP

Village official killed

CEBU CITY—A village official in Barili, Cebu was killed and six others were injured when a bus hit the tricycle he was driving on Easter Sunday. Killed was Rogelio Villordon, 59, barangay councilor of Kalubihan, Barili. Police reports showed that Villordon was driving his tricycle on his way home from the town's public market last Sunday when it was hit by a Chan Transit bus. SPO2 Andres Alpas of the Barili police said Jovito Mahinay, the bus driver, failed to immediately step on the brakes when the tricycle suddenly stopped after its engine overheated. Mahinay surrendered to the police.

Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau

Drought in Negros

BACOLOD CITY—The prolonged drought caused by El Niño damaged about 500 hectares of crop land in Negros Occidental's four cities and two towns. The Provincial Agriculturist's Office said P3,697,281.90 worth of rice, corn and peanuts were lost due to the drought that affected the cities of Kabankalan, Bago, Himamaylan and Victorias and the towns of Candoni and Hinigaran. But provincial agriculturist Igmedio Tabianan said the figure was lower than that registered in previous droughts that hit the country. Almost all of the affected plantations were ricefields.

Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau

87 dogs rescued

BAGUIO CITY—Police on Friday rescued at least 87 dogs bound for underground slaughterhouses in the city and in La Trinidad, Benguet. The city veterinarian's office said the dogs were loaded into a jeepney from Batangas. Seven dogs had died from suffocation when the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group caught up with the jeepney in La Trinidad. The jeepney drivers, Domingo Garcia Jr. and Ernido Lat, were charged with violation of the Animal Welfare Act.

Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Top Aklanons cited

TWO outstanding Aklanons, former Assemblyman Jose Tumbokon and the late Justice Godofredo Ramos, will receive special citations from the Aklan Press Club and the Publishers Association of the Philippines for their exemplary role in the promotion of press freedom. The awarding will be held during the national press summit in Kalibo, Aklan. Tumbokon, a member of the Batasang Pambansa, brought honor to Aklan and its people when he served in various media capacities, according to a news release. Ramos, who served as the first governor of Aklan, set the tone of promoting press freedom in the province.

Citation for Sin

THE AKLAN Press Club, in cooperation with the Publishers Association of the Philippines on Friday, will cite Jaime Cardinal Sin, a native of Aklan and archbishop of Manila, as the "Greatest Aklanon Newsmaker." The award presentation highlights the 47th founding anniversary of Aklan and a special event of the First Community Press Summit on April 23-27 in Kalibo and Boracay Island, according to a news release. Sin was cited for his eminent stature as media's greatest newsmaker since the 1970s when he launched the Catholic Church's "critical collaboration" with the Marcos regime, his call on the faithful to go to Edsa in 1986 and the role he played in Edsa II in 2000.

Cell phone regulation

LEGAZPI CITY—The provincial board has approved a resolution regulating the use of cell phones in public offices, classrooms and government-owned and controlled corporations in Albay. Rances said the frequent use of cell phones during office hours wasted government time which could have been spent for more productive and client-oriented endeavors. Violators of the ordinance, which was passed on April 15, will be punished with a reprimand, suspension or dismissal from office. Rances said the heads of the different offices would monitor the strict implementation of the ordinance.

Ronnie Lorejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

No mercy for rapist

BAGUIO CITY—The family of a 16-year-old girl who was raped and killed last week wants no mercy for the suspect. Minchita Toyaoan, mother of victim Marilou Toyaoan, said the murder hurt not only their family but the whole community. Toyaoan said their friends and relatives had approached her and told her to pursue the case against Donto Dimaisip, 27, the family's neighbor and a distant relative. Marilou, who just graduated from high school, was crowned Miss Bugulas 2003 last month. She was last seen leaving the birthday party of a friend on April 13 in Loo Village. Her body was found two days later in a nearby creek. Dimaisip surrendered to the police on April 17. He said he was drunk.

Frank Cimatu, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

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RP death probable SARS

From page A1

Asked whether the second probable SARS case and the big number of people quarantined would make a SARS outbreak here possible, Dr. Jean Marc Olive, the World Health Organization's representative to the Philippines, said: "There is a possibility. But for the time being, no one of those [who got in close contact with Catalon] has developed fever. Local transmission will be established once we have [SARS] cases among those who got into contact with [her]."

The Philippines' first announced probable SARS case is a 64-year-old foreigner who has since recovered and is not known to have infected anyone, officials said.

Among Catalon's 54 close contacts were her father, a driver, an 11-year-old boy and a baby she had cuddled.

All four developed fever last week and were taken to the Research Institute of Tropical Medicine in Alabang.

Dayrit said the driver, the boy and the baby no longer had fever as of yesterday morning.

But the father remains with fever, Dayrit said, adding: "His case is complicated because he has cancer."

Dr. Antonio Amparo, chief of the Bureau of Quarantine detail at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, said the DOH National Epidemiology Center was tracing the passengers of the Japan Airlines flight from Narita that Catalon took on April 4.

"We are asking the airline to give us a copy of the seating arrangement of the flight," Amparo told reporters at a news conference.

He said contact tracing started with the acquisition of the flight manifest.

At a briefing that preceded the news conference, an official of the airline said: "We are ready to give them the documents, but they have to give us their request in black and white."

Dayrit said that upon her arrival in her native Pangasinan, Catalon immediately went around Luzon in search of a doctor to treat her cancer-stricken father.

The search reportedly took her from Pangasinan to Tarlac, Pampanga, Baguio and Metro Manila and brought her in casual contact with as many as 2,000 persons. All have been told to go on voluntary isolation.

Pangasinan health officials said they had isolated at least three households that Catalon visited. Among those with whom she had contact were children with ages ranging from 3 to 16.

Dayrit said the woman could have been infected by the mother of her roommate in Toronto, with the initials DC.

"It turned out that the mother of DC was already ill of SARS when [Catalon] bade her goodbye on April 1. But the mother did not know she had SARS," Dayrit said.

He said the mother was taken to a hospital in Canada on April 4 and was now considered a SARS patient. DC still has no symptoms of SARS, but her father has contracted pneumonia.

Dayrit said the mother was most probably infected by the Filipino doctor, who contracted the disease from another SARS patient. The patient, who has since also died, was a member of the Bukas Loob sa Diyos, a Philippine Catholic charismatic group.

Dayrit, however, said Catalon and the woman who infected her had "no connection" with the Bukas Loob sa Dios.

Members of DC's family reportedly visited the Philippines in the first week of March, and returned to Canada via Hong Kong.

Alert list

Canada has reported 14 SARS deaths and about 300 suspect and probable SARS cases. Toronto, its largest city, is the epicenter of the largest SARS outbreak outside of Asia.

The DOH has added Canada, Japan and the United States to its alert list. Travelers from these countries will undergo health checks at the Naia and other ports of entry, and aircraft will be disinfected.

In Hong Kong, two more overseas Filipino workers—a nurse and a domestic helper—were taken to a hospital for SARS.

The two are already "out of critical condition" although they are still under observation in the hospital, Dayrit said.

Labor Undersecretary Manuel Imson said the Philippine Overseas Labor Office in Hong Kong was still verifying how the OFWs were infected.

The two new cases brought to 27 the total number of Filipinos in Singapore and Hong Kong who had been afflicted with the mysterious ailment. One of these Filipinos died of SARS in Hong Kong last month. *With reports from Norman Bordadora and Blanche S. Rivera in Manila; Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

DOH vows to enforce RP's quarantine law

From page A1

quire them to be confined and quarantined should they appear to have symptoms of SARS," Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit said yesterday. But he added that the Department of Health could not confine those who had no symptoms of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome.

He also said the DOH would ask barangay leaders to help impose the quarantine of people considered a "threat to health safety," and pointed out that in Singapore, authorities were using video cameras to monitor those ordered to stay in their homes.

Dayrit said relatives of "SARS contacts" could also help in the quarantine. "We are asking people to take personal responsibility [to stop the spread of SARS]," he said. "Relatives can provide the social support and pressure."

He urged people returning from SARS-infected countries to go on voluntary home quarantine for seven days to avoid spreading the disease.

He cited the case of the Filipino nursing attendant who died at the San Lazaro Hospital last week and who had been reclassified as a "probable" SARS case. *(See banner story)*

The woman, who arrived here early this month from Canada, had contact with hundreds of people prior to her death, Dayrit said. If any of them comes down with the disease, the DOH and the World Health Organization can declare that there is now local transmission of SARS here, and the Philippines will be classified as a SARS-infected country.

"This would not happen had she only gone on voluntary home isolation," Dayrit said.

But he said the DOH was rushing work on isolation facilities in regional and even private hospitals. "It looks like we really have to gear up for the long haul," he said.

Dayrit also said the SARS testing center being put up at the Research Institute of Tropical Medicine in Alabang would be "operational" within the week.

The DOH has ordered the Bureau of Quarantine detail at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport to institute SARS checks on travelers and aircraft coming from three more countries—the United States, Canada and Japan.

Dr. Antonio Amparo, chief of the quarantine bureau at the Naia, said the DOH issued the order yesterday morning.

With the addition of the three countries, airport general manager Edgardo Manda said, additional SARS desks would be put up at the concourse areas of each Naia terminal.

Medical staff needed

Manda said the Manila International Airport Authority was still looking for additional medical staff for the SARS desks.

He said 20 to 30 more nurses were needed, to add to the six doctors and nine nurses hired to augment the quarantine personnel.

But the number is not enough, Manda said.

"The first batch is still there, but we are finding it difficult to hire more," he said. "Perhaps they are afraid."

Around 800 Filipino workers departing for and arriving from Singapore and Hong Kong are being given vitamins and face masks daily at the Naia.

The Overseas Workers Welfare Administration gives each worker 14 tablets of ascorbic acid good for a week.

This strips the Owwa Medicare fund of at least P12,000 a day, according to deputy administrator Delmer Cruz. But he said "the Owwa has enough money."

Cruz also said the Owwa gave P300,000 each to the labor offices in Singapore and Hong Kong for the distribution of vitamins and face masks in the two places, a melting pot of Filipino workers.

American soldiers who will take part in the RP-US Balikatan military exercises will also be monitored for symptoms of SARS.

Undersecretary Amado Valdez, chief of the Visiting Forces Agreement Commission, said the participants in the exercises would not be exempt from the customs-immigration-quarantine (CIQ) procedures for travelers coming from SARS-infected countries.

"They have to follow CIQ procedures at Clark [in Pampanga]. They were also given special instructions to be forthright with their personal information, so we can check if anyone is to be isolated," Valdez said.

Some 400 US soldiers have arrived for the Balikatan. More than a thousand more are due next week. *With a report from Blanche S. Rivera*

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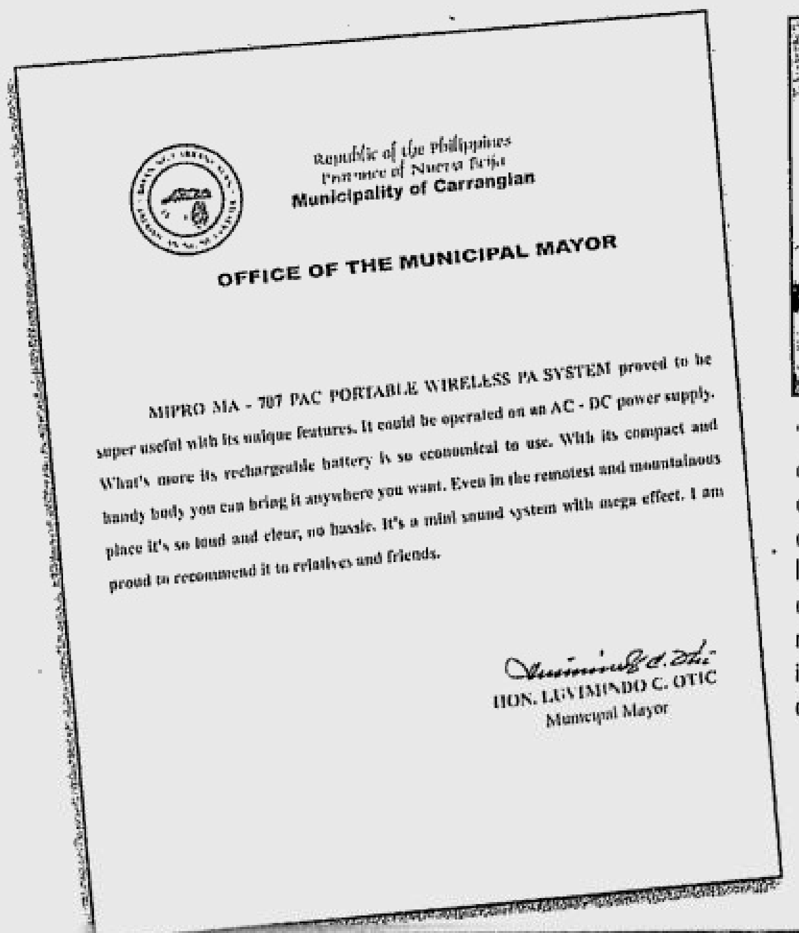

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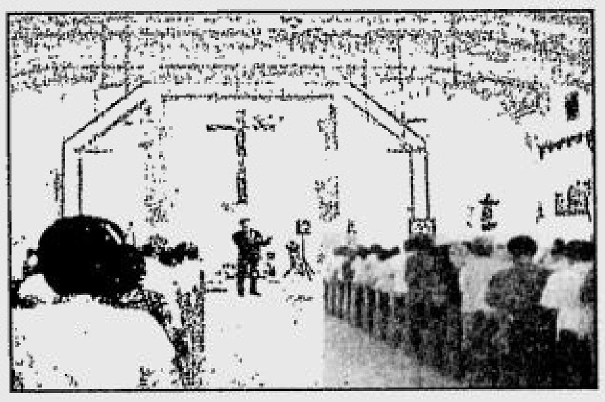

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Asia epidemic worsens

From page A1

ple's very survival is concerned, so no delay is allowed, nor is any negligence," the official Xinhua news agency said in a commentary carried by several state newspapers on Monday. "Any inappropriate methods of work will . . . evolve into grave catastrophe."

Other analysts, however, said that drastic measures designed to curb SARS had likely come too late to prevent the epidemic from threatening virtually all of China's 1.3 billion people.

A decision to cancel the weeklong May Day holidays to keep people from traveling will also have little effect since the virus has probably already spread to all corners of the continent-sized country, they said.

"It's too late, they can't put the genie back in the bottle," said Andrew Thompson, an expert on Chinese health issues at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

"It's got to be everywhere by now, and if it isn't, it will soon be there," he said.

Beijing mayor sacked

Meng Xuenong, who took over as mayor of Beijing only in January, had been expected to lose his job after he and Health Minister Zhang Wenkang were stripped of their high positions within the ruling Communist Party on Sunday. Zhang has also been formally fired as health minister.

Zhang and Meng, a 54-year-old protege of Chinese President Hu Jintao, were singled out for blame following intense criticism of the way the central government had failed to fully disclose the severity of the epidemic and the Chinese leader's call to halt the cover-up.

After admitting more than 700 confirmed or suspected SARS cases in Beijing on Sunday, the Chinese health ministry again raised the death toll on Monday as the orders to come clean kicked in.

There were another four SARS deaths in China, including two in Beijing, the World Health Organization said. The official nationwide death toll now stands at 86. The figure, however, does not include two deaths reported by the local media yesterday in the northern city of Tianjin and another two in Shanxi province.

There were also 132 new cases of the flu-like virus in the country, bringing the tally to 1,959. The WHO said cases were recorded for the first time in the provinces of Zhejiang, Jilin, Liaoning and Gansu.

The international health agency believes the number of cases will rise sharply again soon. The WHO representative in China, Henk Bekedam, told Reuters that a team of experts investigating the disease believed that as many as half of the 402 suspected cases in Beijing could be categorized as "probable," or clinically confirmed.

"The expert team felt from the cases that they had seen that quite a percentage, let's say 50 percent of the cases, most likely could be probable," Bekedam said.

The Chinese media said that the stunning increase of cases in Beijing bolstered allegations that officials had tried to hide the extent of the disease and sparked fear among the capital's 14 million residents.

HK death toll

The Hong Kong government reported six more people died from SARS on Monday, pushing to 94 the death toll in the territory. Twenty-two new cases were also reported, increasing the total number of cases to 1,402. Authorities do not include in their figures the case of an American who was pronounced dead on arrival at a Hong Kong hospital after being transferred from mainland China.

The education secretary said schools would reopen in stages, with students wearing surgical masks to reduce the risk of contracting SARS. Schools were closed after some students fell ill, although experts say there is no sign that the virus was spread in classrooms.

Older students are to return to class Tuesday, while other schools reopen next Monday, said Education Secretary Dr. Arthur Li. Even so, some schools plan to stay closed because of anxiety about the disease.

Hong Kong underwent a massive clean-up during the weekend with government officials and residents disinfecting parks, commercial buildings, housing estates and polluted streets in a bid to wipe out the virus, which has led most people to wear face masks in public.

Macau, Singapore, Canada

In Macau, a 38-year-old saleswoman was in quarantine with the territory's first suspected case of SARS after complaining of symptoms including a cough and fever, the health bureau said.

It said the woman in quarantine had not traveled out of Macau recently or come in contact with a SARS patient.

The former Portuguese colony has been free of SARS, despite its proximity to Hong Kong, which lies 64 km to the east.

In Singapore, health ministry officials were preparing Monday to quarantine at home all 2,400 workers at Pasir Panjang Wholesale Center—the city-state's main distribution point for imported fruits and vegetables.

A 10-day shutdown at the market is expected to significantly disrupt Singapore's supply of fresh produce, the Ministry of National Development said. A total of 467 people have already been confined to their homes. Singapore has reported 16 deaths. *Reports from AFP, Reuters and AP*

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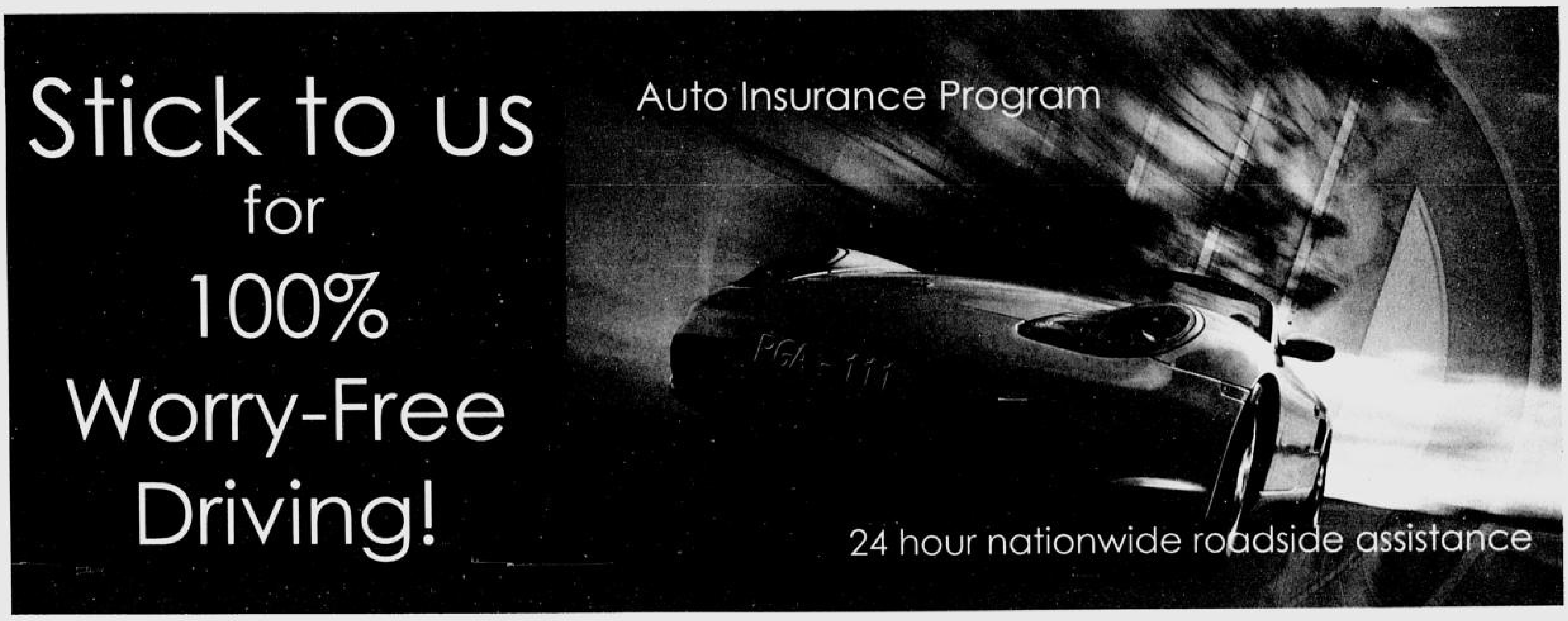
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GMA going to Bangkok for Asean SARS summit

From page A1

tation despite short notice, her spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said, even as he denied that the President was unnecessarily risking exposure to the SARS virus.

"Of course the pros and cons have been considered and the President has made her decision to attend," he said during a press briefing.

Thailand has seven probable SARS cases as of April 18, but it has no reported case of community transmission.

"I'm sure this conference . . . will be able to really highlight what needs to be done, and be able to come up with a closer coordination to fight SARS," Bunye said. "SARS is a worldwide problem and this is something that we have to address together."

The President and her party will leave Manila on April 28 and return right after the one-day summit.

Asked if the President would go on voluntary quarantine for at least a week, as required of all travelers coming from SARS-affected places, Bunye smiled and said: "We'll answer that at the proper time."

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations groups Brunei, Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Ms Macapagal has ordered a tight watch on coastal towns where people with SARS might enter the country. At present, airports and seaports are already being monitored for possible SARS cases.

"Illegal entrants must be reported immediately to the national authorities," she told mayors during a conference at the Manila Hotel yesterday.

"(We) must deal with (SARS) transparently, systematically and in a unified way so that we can detect it, contain it and heal its victims," she said. *With a report from AFP*

$3.50 a day for Iraq volunteers

From page A1

In contrast, Filipinos who joined UN peacekeeping missions in Cambodia, Kosovo and East Timor received at least $90 a day.

Senior Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil, national police spokesperson, downplayed the difference. "Yes (this is much lower), but our forces are going there on a humanitarian mission. Let's not lose focus on the intent of the mission. That's why it's voluntary on the part of the forces."

He added: "We would expect that our forces there would make do with whatever the government and other organizations will provide them."

So far, no volunteer from the Philippine National Police or the Armed Forces of the Philippines has backed out because of the paltry allowance, officials said.

"So far, we have not monitored any volunteers backing out of the mission at the moment. Anyway, an additional allowance is being worked out," Bataoil told reporters.

He was referring to a daily allowance of $50 that the Philippine government may provide.

"The $3.50 coming from the US coalition forces as earlier announced will be given to them (the volunteers) plus $50 which is still being worked out. So a total of $53.50 will be given to them, but that is still tentative," he said at a press briefing.

The budget for the additional $50 has yet to be approved, Bataoil added. The allowance comes on top of the volunteers' regular pay and allowances.

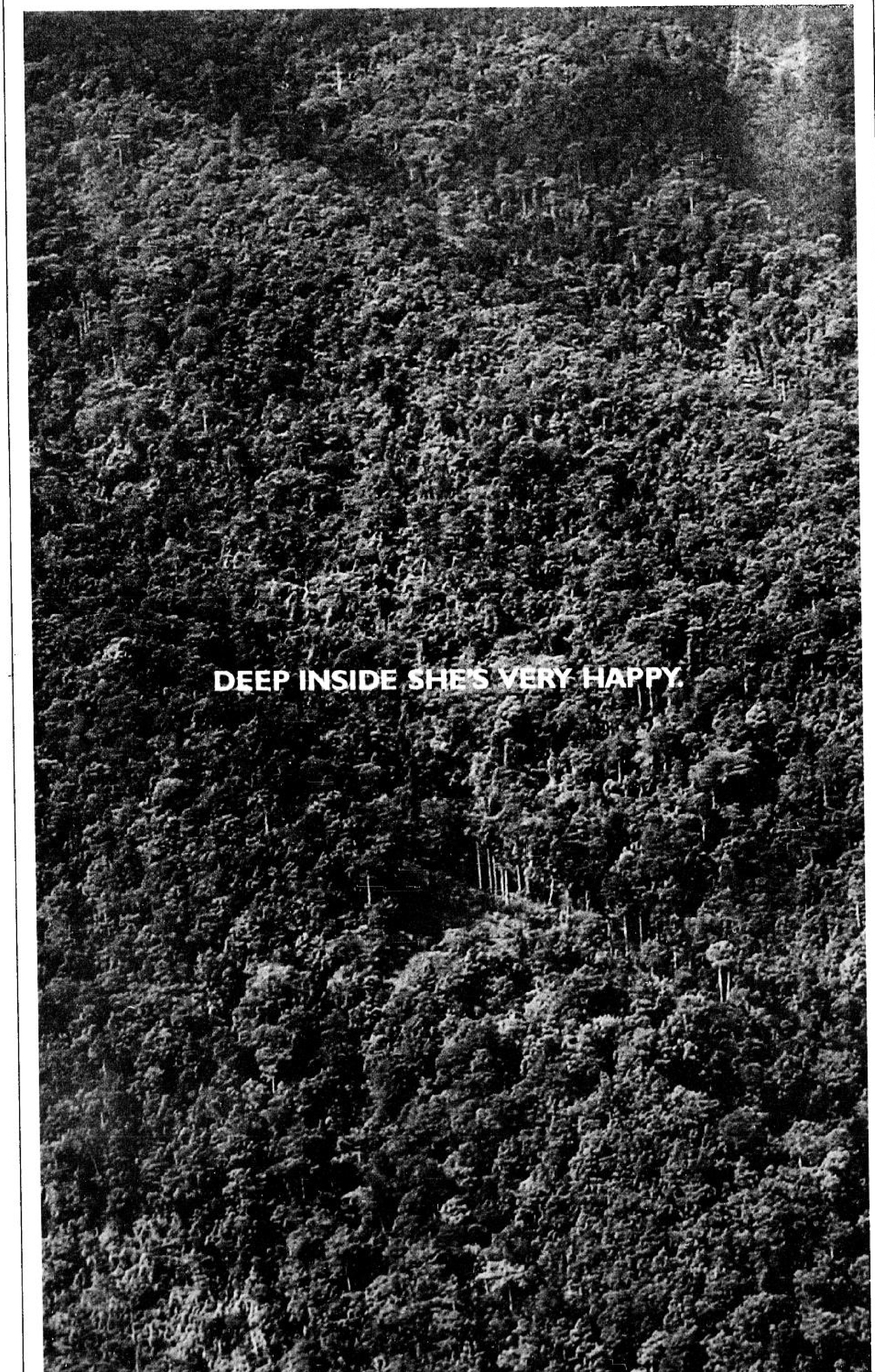
Maj. Paul Marcelo, commandant of the AFP peacekeeping school in Camp Aguinaldo, confirmed Bataoil's information, noting that while the $3.50 allowance was in the bag, the $50 allowance is not yet definite.

The government is sending 300 soldiers, 100 policemen and 100 medical personnel to Iraq next month. The military's "standby peacekeeping force" of 300 soldiers is currently undergoing pre-deployment training in cultural awareness and Arabic languages, among other topics, Marcelo said.

A nine-man survey, liaison and surveillance team that will be sent ahead of the 500-man contingent will include Muslim officers and enlisted personnel of the AFP, a ranking general said.

"They would be there to act as interpreters and as occasional resource persons, when necessary, on the cultural sensitivity aspect," Lt. Gen. Rodolfo Garcia, AFP vice chief of staff and spokesperson, told reporters.

Garcia said that there was no definite date yet for the departure of the Philippine contingent, but he reiterated that this would not be earlier than May 15.



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ANG

Dante Ang . . .

From page A1

The Firm, the law office has been closely associated with Ms Macapagal and her family.

The INQUIRER tried to contact the Villaraza, Angangco Law Office yesterday to no avail. The secretaries of lawyers Arthur Villaraza and Raul Angangco said their bosses were unavailable for comment. They claimed that Villaraza was out of the country while Angangco was out of the office.

Shakedowns

In the articles, Ang pledged to expose what he described as "mind-boggling shakedowns" by those "who corrupt the law" and "who prostitute the judicial system."

"Yes, I am scared," Ang wrote in the article titled "Seize the day or be a wimp," which was published on April 20.

"But I have crossed the Rubicon," he said. "I shall fight my battles to their logical conclusion—alone if need be."

In his first article, published on April 13 and titled "A dog named Viaje," Ang said that he was breaking his self-imposed silence on affairs involving the Macapagal administration.

"But this time I have to make an exemption," Ang said. He noted that Viaje had come to act as a "feudal lord," expecting "every deal, every business transaction in the complex to pass through him and his kennel or the tenants will forever be harassed."

The 'complex' Ang was referring to was Malacañang and the 'tenants' corporations wanting to do business in the country.

In his first article, Ang said a 'tenant' was "being milked of $20 million worth of cows" while another was being fleeced of P300 million.

Two telecom firms

"Not to mention his attempt to corner the transportation insurance business and to put the heat on two feuding telecom firms so they would hire him as their court general," he said.

In the article, Ang said transactions "must pass through Viaje and his kennel" or else "tenants who do not come across are harassed and dispossessed."

"Not to worry, he will take care of the President and her husband, so he boasts," Ang said, in clear reference to Ms Macapagal and First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo.

"Sometimes he invokes 'campaign financing.' For whom? He didn't say. Was it for the President? Being the smart *askal* (*asong kalye* or street dog) that he is, Viaje would only smile, more like a smirk to me, implying confirmation," Ang wrote.

Why is Ang raving?

In his article on Sunday, Ang indicated that Viaje was starting to go after him.

Ang claimed that before the Holy Week, a mutual friend brought to him a message from his arch foe: "I am after Dante Ang. He will be arrested in a matter of days."

Ang said that two or three days later, "the case" against him was about to be raffled off in court but he did not provide details.

BankWise

Several days ago, Ang and board members of BankWise, a thrift bank that Ang chairs, posted bail in a P40.5-million estafa case filed against them by a foreign national.

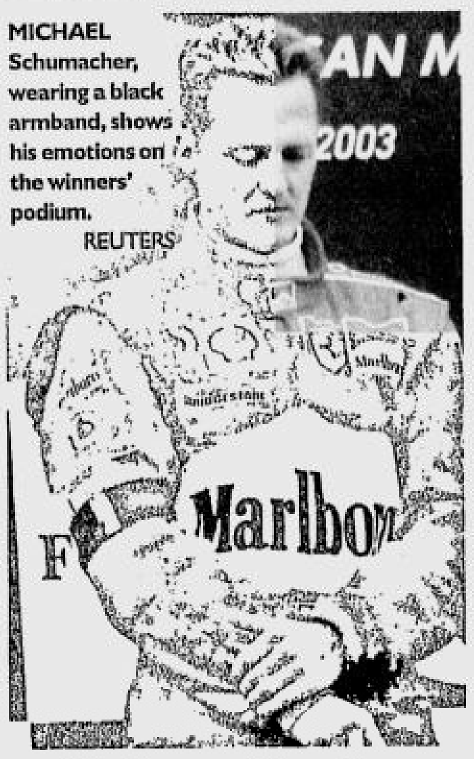
In his second article, Ang noted that one of the public prosecutors in the case "came from Viaje's kennel and I understand (he) is aspiring to become an appellate court (justice)."

Ang said he was not alone in raging against Viaje and his kennel.

"Business is getting restless. Those whose interests were prejudiced by Viaje and his kennel are getting fidgety. Meanwhile, many of those in Viaje's profession are preparing moves to bring back decency to their ranks and to uphold the supremacy of the law," the Manila Times owner said.

Ang warned that the "dam could burst any time."

"Cracks are visible. They are all over the place. The consequences are ugly" he said. *With a report from Michael Lim Ubac*



MICHAEL Schumacher, wearing a black armband, shows his emotions on the winners' podium. REUTERS

'Schumi' wins after ma's death

IMOLA, Italy—Michael Schumacher kept his composure Sunday to win the San Marino Grand Prix just hours after his mother died.

After starting in the pole position, the defending world champion was overtaken by brother Ralf Schumacher on the race's first turn. When Ralf went in for a pit stop after 16 laps, Michael took the lead again and led most of the way thereafter, driving his Ferrari over the 62 lap, 305.609-kilometer (189.896-mile) layout in one hour, 28 minutes and 12.058 seconds for his first victory of the season.

Ralf Schumacher, who started in second position, finished fourth in a Williams.

After dominating Saturday's qualifying, the Schumacher brothers flew to Cologne, Germany for a brief, final visit to their 55-year-old mother. They returned to Italy late Saturday night and team officials said they never considered pulling out of the race after learning of their mother's death Sunday morning. *AP*

TOUR PILIPINAS

Dolosa to lead Gilbey's attack

By June Navarro

RENATO DOLOSA. Warren Davadilla. Lloyd Reynante.

Do these names ring a bell?

In the local cycling scene, they certainly do and these riders will lead their respective teams in the 15-stage, 2,460-kilometer Tour Pilipinas 2003.

Dolosa, a former back-to-back Tour champion, spearheads the championship aspirations of Gilbey's Island Punch in the Tour reeling off on April 26 and ends on May 11.

Known as the "Thinking Cyclist," Dolosa has a vast experience and knowledge on how it takes to win a multi-stage cycling marathon, skills which are expected to inspire his teammates–former national rider Lito Atilano, Michael Primero, Benigno Marmol, Desi Hardin, Reynaldo Asuncion and Ruel Casaljay.

DOLOSA

DAVADILLA

With this roster, majority of whom have Tour experiences, Gilbey's Island Punch head coach and former Talisay, Quezon vice mayor Juancho Ramores are bound to encounter only a few bumps on the road.

But Ramores and his wards will certainly be ranged and challenged by the rest of the field, including Davadilla, who will lead the attack for Intel in the race for the P1 million top team prize and the P200,000 individual champion's purse.

Davadilla, the last champion of the previous tour before it folded up in 1998, will join hands with Nilo Estayo, Fernando Alagano, Michael Reyes, Arthur Bucay, Rayson Galdones and national rider Paulo Manapol.

The presence of Davadilla and his teammates is expected to make things easy for head coach Norberto Oconer, who vowed that Intel would make a name in the bikathon.

On their path, however, is Samsung, the South Korean electronics giant, which will pin its hopes on promising riders Ryan Taguilig and Lloyd Reynante, son of the fabled Maui, who built his dreaded reputation in the sport during the 70s.

Tanpoco, Quitara reach Hilado q'finals

MAIKA Tanpoco turned back Kariz de Dios, 1-6, 6-3, 6-0, while Zhane Quitara swamped Enan Baba, 6-0, 6-1, yesterday to reach the girls' 12-under quarterfinals in the Luis Hilado Memorial Cup at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

In the boys' 16-under division, Jose Antonio Bautista outplayed Max Lorenz Banson, 7-5, 7-6 (6), Raymond Villarete blasted Rommel Enilo, 6-0, 6-0, Daniel Macalino trounced Limwell Vallena, 6-2, 6-0, Mark Balce beat Napoleon De Castro, 6-3, 6-3, Vincent Atienza defeated James Agnes, 6-0, 7-5, and Bryan Dayleg whipped Homer Paolo Perez, 6-0, 6-1, to advance in the second round.

Sixth seed Jigo Pena outclassed Marco Suntay, 6-1, 6-1, and Alberto Villamor downed Pemrik Alina, 7-5, 6-3, to gain second-round berths in the boys' 12-under class. Other winners were Jomar Narvaez over Juan Pocholo Macalino, 6-2, 6-2, Noel Agra over Kyle Cordero, 6-4, 6-4, and Larry Carino over Aldrick Oliven, 6-2, 6-2.

First-round winners in the unisex 10-under class were Ronnel Santiago over John Ribaya, 3-6, 7-6 (2), 6-2, Ino Canlas over Patricia Orteza, 6-2, 6-2, and Leander Lazaro over Prince Salvacion, 6-1, 6-2.

Love snares Heritage on 4th playoff hole

HILTON HEAD ISLAND, South Carolina—Davis Love III chipped in on the final hole to force a playoff, then hit the flagstick with his approach on the fourth extra hole to defeat Woody Austin and win his fifth MCI Heritage on Sunday.

If anyone needed proof of Love's mastery over Harbour Town Golf Links, they got it here.

Trailing Austin by a stroke on the final hole, Love rolled in a wedge from 66 feet away to tie for the lead at 13-under 271. Then, after watching Austin miss makable putts for the victory on the second and third extra holes, Love struck a 6-iron that bounced off the pin and settled about 3 feet away. *AP*

Jungolf Tour 3rd leg starts

THE THIRD leg of Samsung Jungolf Tour, the local qualifier for the Callaway Junior World Championships, gets going today in two venues.

A total of 162 kids who will be fighting it out in a gruelling 72-hole battle at the Manila Southwoods Legends (Classes A, B and C) and Riviera Executive courses (Classes D and E).

The results of the event, which gives away free tickets to Los Angeles to division winners, will determine the composition of the 24-player Philippine delegation to the Junior World in San Diego, California this coming July with the Tour's co-presenter Philippine Airlines flying all age-group champs for free.

Electrobus Consolidated, the local distributor of Callaway, is also awarding special prizes for the winners. The regular co-sponsors of the Tour are Airlift Asia, Air Liquide Phils., Global Lighting and Exito Manufacturing. Pisanti, Bellevue Manila, Third World Ex-import, HBW Enterprises, MCCI Corp. and BF Technology are minor sponsors.

"We are on a winning streak and we hope that the next batch of Junior World bets will keep it going," said Jungolf chair Amalia "Mommy" Montecillo.

SPORTSTV

Compiled by Lorenzo Manguiat

BASKETBALL: NBA Playoffs - Jazz vs Kings, Game 2, 10:30 a.m. (r - 8 p.m.), Solar Sports
World Pro Basketball Challenge, 10:30 a.m. (r), ESPN
NBA Anthology - Unforgettabulls 6th Championship Season of the Bulls, 7:30 p.m., ESPN
GOLF: LPGA Office Depot, 8 a.m. (r), ESPN
POOL: 2002 WPBA Classic Tour, 1 p.m. (r), ESPN
SOCCER: EPL Highlights, 12 noon and 4:30 p.m., ESPN

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Race schedule

Lap	Activity	Start/End Point	Length	Date
1	Massed Start	Legaspi-Sorsogon-Legaspi	183.0 Kms	26 April
2	Team Time Trial	Daraga-Naga	91.2 Kms	27 April
3	Massed Start	Naga-Daet	98.0 Kms	28 April
4	Massed Start	Daet-Atimonan-Lucena	207.1 Kms	29 April
5	Massed Start	Lucena-Tagaytay	175.4 Kms	30 April
6	Massed Start	Tagaytay-Marikina	202.6 Kms	01 May
7	Massed Start	Marikina-Olongapo	201.6 Kms	02 May
		Rest Day		03 May
8	Massed Start	Olongapo-Dagupan	247.6 Kms	04 May
9	Massed Start	Dagupan-Vigan	206.0 Kms	05 May
10	Team Time Trial	Vigan-Laoag	83.0 Kms	06 May
11	Massed Start	Laoag-San Fernando	214.2 Kms	07 May
12	Massed Start	San Fernando-Baguio	160.6 Kms	08 May
13	Ind. Time Trial	Rosario-Baguio	36.0 Kms	09 May
14	Massed Start	Agoo-Malolos	199.8 Kms	10 May
15	Massed Start	Manila (Circuit)	115.0 Kms	11 May

Bemedalled RP wrestler killed in Cavite bike crash

By Marc Anthony Reyes

TRAGEDY struck twice for Philippine wrestling.

Barely a month after its president Gen. Manuel Ribo (ret.) passed away, a bemedalled national team member perished following a freak motorcycle crash at about 2 a.m. last Good Friday in a gravelly road in Dasmariñas, Cavite.

Twenty-two-year-old Kirk Go, who won the gold medal in the Greco-Roman 120-lb category during the Southeast Asian Championships held here last August, expired a few hours later while being treated at La Salle Hospital.

Wrestling Association of the Philippines president Mario Ocampo said Go was driving a motorcycle owned by another national wrestler Margarito Angana, who was seated behind him.

They were on their way back to Manila after enjoying a Lenten break in Tagaytay with other members of the national team when, speeding downhill, Go lost control of the wheels after passing through a portion of the road filled with gravel.

Ocampo added that while Go was still trying to rein in the wayward motorcycle, their companions riding on a separate bike rushed to their rescue.

But the second bike, driven by yet another teammate John Esteban and his wife, accidentally hit their rear wheel which caused Go and Angana to take that fatal crash.

Go, who was wearing a helmet, was pinned down by his motorcyle, while Angana hurtled to the pavement a few meters away.

Angana, who sustained only bruises and cut, even helped the Estebans rush Go to the hospital. Angana, 19, was immediately discharged and is already at the athletes quarters of the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex yesterday.

Esteban, a silver medalist in the 2001 SEA championships in Bangkok, and his wife escaped unhurt. *With a report from Lorenzo Manguiat*

SPORTSWATCH

2 John-O cagers out

JOHN-O will be missing starter Al Vergara and reliever Romar Menor when it tangles with LBC-Batangas at 2 p.m. today in the Sunkist-PBL 2003 Unity Cup at the Pasig Sports Center. Vergara and Menor were both sanctioned by PBL commissioner Chino Trinidad for the flagrant fouls they committed during the John-O-ICTSI tussle won by ICTSI, 70-48, on April 15. The 5-foot-7 Vergara was fined P2,000 and suspended for one game for hitting ICTSI's Mark Cardona's face with a fist with 1 minute and 55 seconds to go. The 6-4 Menor, on the other hand, was fined P2,000 and suspended for three games for punching ICTSI's Carlo Sharma on the chin without provocation early in the fourth quarter. Other games pit ICTSI against Hapee at 4 p. m. and Montaña against RP Team at 6 p.m. ***Roy Luarca***

Dementieva scores

AMELIA ISLAND, Florida—Elena Dementieva of Russia beat Lindsay Davenport 4-6, 7-5, 6-3 Sunday at the Bausch & Lomb Championships to win her first title in five years as a pro. Dementieva, 21, truly earned the crystal bowl and $93,000 she collected for the victory on the green clay. The final was a 2-hour, 6-minute struggle against the second-seeded Davenport who was, by her own estimation, playing some of the best tennis of her career. After the last point, the 10th-seeded Dementieva lifted her hands, covered her mouth and shrugged her shoulders — yeah, she finally did it. Her mom, Vera, lifted her hands to applaud her daughter's first victory in five finals appearances. ***AP***

Kenyans eye repeat

BOSTON—Kenya's Rodgers Rop, the world record holder at 25 kilometers, has never finished lower than third in any marathon he's run. He's also the defending champion in Boston and New York City at the 42.2-kilometer (26.2-mile) distance. On Monday, Rop will try to make it two in a row when he toes the line in Hopkinton, Massachusetts, on his way to Copley Square for the 107th edition of the Boston Marathon. Margaret Okayo, who is also from Kenya, is the defending women's champion and course record holder. She's trying to become the fifth straight women to win at least back-to-back titles in Boston. ***AP***

Derby rematch on tap

CONTENDERS for the Cocker of the Year 2003 race will be fielding their multi-winners in today's "9th Ucap/J-Cap MAD at RBA 7-Cock Derby" at the Mandaluyong Coliseum. Sponsored by Sagupaan Hammer Dewormer, Sagupaan Mite Free Shampoo, Sagupaan B-Forten (anti-stress) and Lakpue Drug's Washout Shampoo, the two-day event is hosted by the powerhouse team of Rep. Rudy Albano, upcoming cocker Alan Tan, Patrick Puno, Manila businessman John Capinpin and the popular Madlambayan Brothers of Pampanga. Derby fans are awaiting the rematch of former ambassador Danding Cojuangco (Bumble Bee Balbina, 38.5 points) and *sabong* idol Patrick Antonio (Sagupaan Hammer, 37.5), champions in the recent "Battle of the Giants 7-Cock." For other inquiries, please contact 531-4003, 531-4005, 534-4110 and 535-2341.

Barcial scooter champ

CARMONA, Cavite—Jaime Barcial marked his return to local scooter racing by topping the kickoff leg of the 2003 Shell Advance Super Scooter Championships before a big weekend crowd at the Carmona Racing Circuit here Sunday. Hardly bothered by the presence of the country's top riders, Barcial, 26, dominated one of two races to take the headstart in this prestigious, seven-part series organized by the E.L. Racing Tech and sponsored by Shell Advance for the sixth straight year. Sharing the limelight were Sherwin Zapanta (Force 1), Dustin Esguerra (Raiders 125), Robert Altea (Jet 100/90cc), Gerry Quinones (50cc open/novice), Anthony Iclan (50cc Honda), Emil Magtales (50cc all-steel), Mark Chua (50cc open expert)and Geoffrey Aguisanda (4-stroke 110-125cc).

'Bancarera' in Surigao

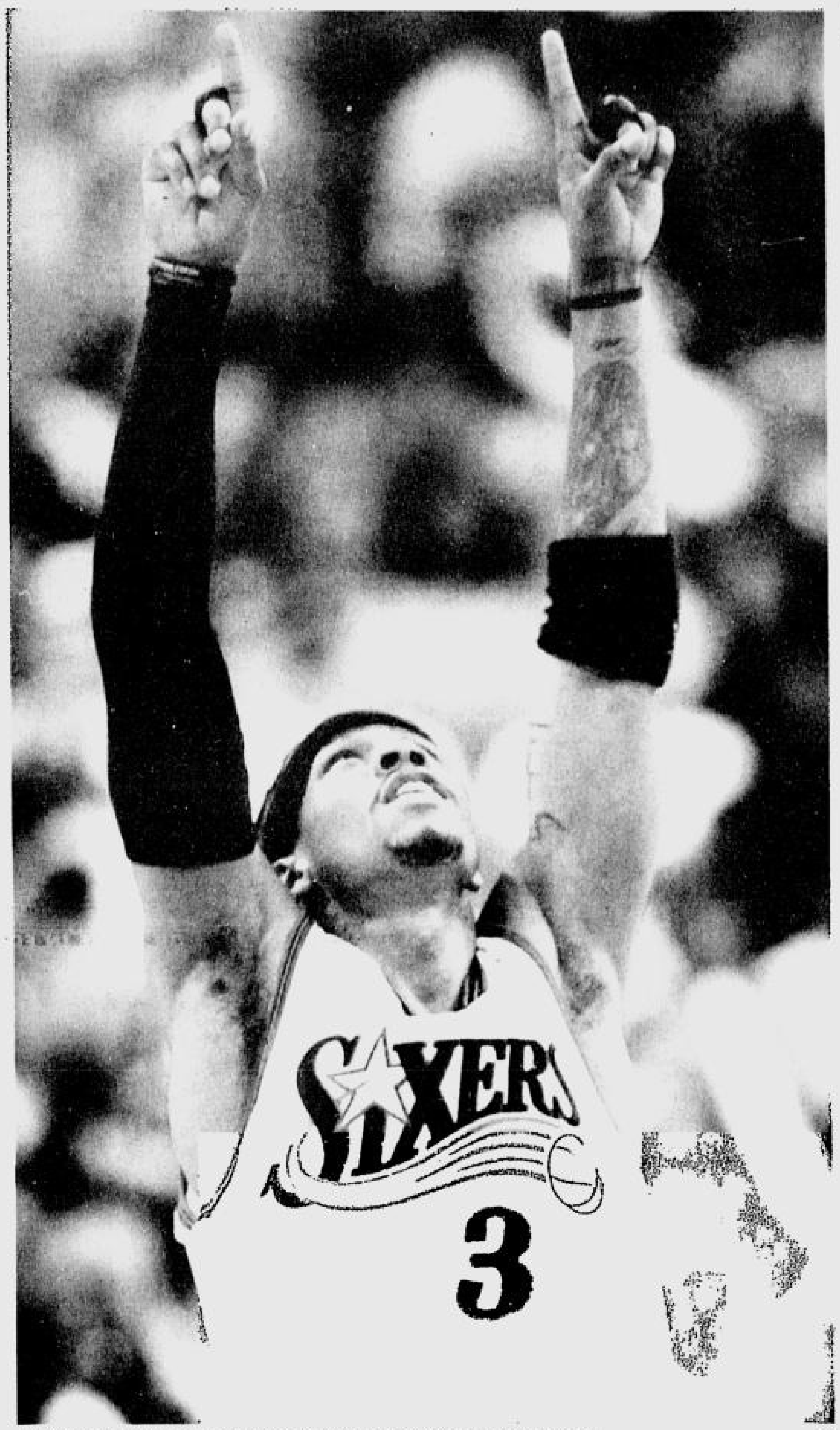
THE 3RD Sen. Robert Barbers Bancarera National Championship gets under way on April 25-27 at Mabua Pebble Beach in Surigao City, Surigao del Norte. More than 500 boat enthusiasts from different regions in the country will participate in the event. Surigao del Norte is noted for its scenic islands, world-class seaport, fishing industry and tourist spots particularly Siargao Island. A total cash prize of P100,000 is at stake in the three-day tournament.

Regatta under way

THE PRACTICE races of the 11th President's Cup Regatta get going at 2 p.m. today at the Subic Bay Freeport. Crewmembers of 12 confirmed entries in the Open Division are expected to converge for the roll call near the docks of the Subic Bay Yacht Club's shoreline. They will familiarize themselves with the waves, the weather and the winds of Subic Bay and in time for Wednesday's opening races at 11 a.m. The regatta is sponsored by Lifestyle Asia Magazine, SKYInternet, Tag Heuer Sport Vision, Absolute Distilled Water, Carnival Hotels, Globe Handyphone, Manila Bulletin, Neil Pryde, Lone Star Light, Princess, Standard Insurance, San Miguel Corp., Tanduay Rhum, David's Prestige, Pagcor, Ralph's Wine and Coke.

NBA PLAYOFFS

Iverson, Lakers wax hot



IVERSON points upwards after the 76ers beat the Hornets, 98-90. AFP

NEW YORK—On a weekend when Allen Iverson scored 55 points to top a list of outstanding individual performances, the team to beat–the Los Angeles Lakers–took a big step in the NBA playoffs.

Iverson was a one-man gang in lifting Philadelphia past New Orleans 98-90 Sunday night. Only Michael Jordan, Elgin Baylor, Wilt Chamberlain and Charles Barkley have scored more in a playoff game.

"The only player I've ever seen play like that was Michael Jordan," 76ers teammate Derrick Coleman said.

The Lakers didn't need such a huge output from one of their stars to successfully begin their quest for a fourth consecutive title. For the first time since beginning their championship run, the Lakers opened on the road and beat Minnesota 117-98.

Kobe Bryant (39 points) and Shaquille O'Neal (32 points, 10 rebounds) did have big outings of their own.

"I don't know what the big deal is about playing on the road," Bryant said. "I've never seen fans scream loud enough to block my jump shot."

In Sunday's other game, Orlando, the eighth seed in the East, got 43 points from league scoring leader Tracy McGrady to upend Detroit 99-94.

"I'm out to prove to a lot of people that although I'm the only All-Star on my team, we're capable of pulling this off," McGrady said.

The playoffs began Saturday with the West's eighth seed, Phoenix, also pulling off a stunner, 96-95 in overtime at San Antonio. Stephon Marbury hit a running 3-point bank shot at the buzzer to lift the Suns.

Dirk Nowitzki's career-high 46 points led Dallas past Portland 96-86, and Paul Pierce had 40 points, 21 in a fourth-period comeback, as Boston rallied past Indiana 103-100.

Kenyon Martin's 21 points and 15 rebounds helped New Jersey beat Milwaukee 109-96. Chris Webber had 27 points and 11 rebounds in Sacramento's 96-90 win against Utah.

The playoffs resume Monday night (Tuesday morning in Manila) with Phoenix at San Antonio, Boston at Indiana, and Utah at Sacramento.

At Minneapolis, Bryant scored 28 points in the first half as the Lakers set the early tempo against a team that never has won a playoff series.

The Lakers, who overcame an 11-19 start to finish with 50 wins, were 19-22 on the road during the regular season. But in the postseason, Los Angeles has won 17 of its last 19 away games.

Kevin Garnett had 23 points, 14 rebounds and seven assists for Minnesota.

At Philadelphia, Iverson made 21 of 32 shots. He had 20 points in the fourth quarter and reached 50 points for the third time in 46 career playoff games. It was his ninth game with at least 40. *AP*

Karl's dilemma

ST. FRANCIS, Wisconsin—Sam Cassell and Gary Payton insist their legal problems played no role in their poor performances in the Bucks' loss in their playoff opener.

Coach George Karl isn't so sure.

"Any time that you've got a legal thing hanging over your head, there's probably some anxiety to it and some worry," he said Sunday. *AP*

Jordan insists playing days 'definitely over'

WASHINGTON—Michael Jordan, in a letter addressed to the game of basketball, insists his NBA playing days are "definitely over, but our relationship will never end."

In a full-page notice Sunday in newspapers including The Washington Post, The New York Times and the Los Angeles Times, Jordan wrote about the sport he began playing when he was 12.

It begins: "Dear Basketball, It's been 28 years since I saw you in the back of our garage. 28 years since our parents introduced us."

The 40-year-old basketball great played his last NBA game Wednesday, ending his career with the Washington Wizards after leading the Chicago Bulls to six titles while becoming the league's third-highest career scorer. *AP*

MJ's 'Final Flight' on IBC-13 tonight

SOLAR Sports bids a final farewell to NBA legend Michael Jordan tonight (Tuesday, April 22) with the airing of "Final Flight," a two-hour, NBA-produced television tribute to Jordan filled with the stirring images and breath-taking moves that defined the career of the greatest basketball player ever, from 7 to 9 on IBC-13.

Meanwhile, Solar's daily coverage of the 2003 NBA Playoffs continues today with Game Two of the Sacramento Kings-Utah Jazz series live at 10:30 a.m. on Solar Sports, with a replay at 8 p.m.

What's your diet?

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

JUST a while back, Newsweek came out with a special issue that zeroed in on "The Perfect Diet" in the new millennium. In a nutshell, it said: "Red meat and white flour are out, whole grains and vegetable oil are in."

If you can believe that, or if you will follow that to the letter, then there's no more beef and pork for you from hereon; also, tasty bread is out of the breakfast table.

But the magazine then bent a little by presenting its "Healthy Eating Pyramid" consisting of, from the top of the pyramid:

1) Red meat, butter, white rice, white bread, potatoes, pasta and sweets (Use sparingly).

2) Dairy or calcium (1 to 2 times a day).

3) Fish, poultry and eggs (0 to 2 times a day).

4) Nuts, legumes (1 to 3 times a day).

5) Fruits (2 to 3 times a day).

6) Vegetables (In abundance).

7) Whole grain foods (At most meals).

8) Plant oils (At most meals).

9) Alcohol (In moderation).

But is Newsweek's new food formula for health flaw-free?

We always hear the saying, "There's no harm in trying."

So, are we going to try Newsweek's "Healthy Eating Pyramid"?

If yes, bulalo, lechon and rice are to be eaten once in a blue moon in accordance with Newsweek's command to "use them sparingly"? *Bulalo* and *lechon* I can do away with for months. But rice?

Give me a break.

What's a *paksiw na tilapia, pritong tawilis*, or broiled bangus if you don't eat them with at least a cup of rice? Some carrots or string beans can go with grilled tuna belly or baked salmon. But a steamed *lapu-lapu* without rice? Or a *kandulıng sinigang sa miso* without rice?

Give me a break.

For one, this is a rice-and-fish country. For another, rice is this country's staple food. In the place where I was born and raised, we eat rice with bagoong (fish sauce) for a snack. If there's no *bagoong*, plain salt will do.

Among many athletes, carbo-loading has always been the rule. Meaning, athletes bound for strenuous activity, whether in competition or mere exercise, are advised to load up on carbohydrates (white rice, pasta, potatoes, etc.)

For years, tennis great Andre Agassi was known to pig on spaghetti hours before a match. It is only the boxer among a few gladiators who is strictly forbidden to eat an abundance of rice; boxers are among the most deprived of food among athletes because their existence, if not survival, is mainly determined by their weight.

The "Healthy Eating Pyramid" also tells us to eat legumes a lot. Fine. But I have a uric acid problem; legumes trigger it.

From Items 5-to-8 are definitely OK, especially the part about fruits and vegetables being recommended to be taken in abundance. I've always been a fruit-and-vegetable man; I love *ampalaya* (leaves and fruits), squash (flowers and fruits), *malunggay* (leaves and fruits), *okra, paco*, broccoli, carrots and virtually every vegetable in sight, including *katuday* flowers (orchid salad, the westerners call it), banana heart (*puso ng saging*, dummy), *sayote* sprouts and *camote* tops.

And then Item 9. Ah, alcohol. The crazy water, the American-Indians used to call it.

Newsweek's "pyramid" said alcohol should be taken in moderation. One or two glasses of wine a day is drinking in moderation, say many health buffs. The grandfather of Lewis Rissman, Riviera's new general manager, would swig two inches high of cognac from his brandy glass before he hit the sack every night.

"That went on for maybe 70, 80 years," said Lewis, called "Genius" by my Insan Taby Tabaniag for his sharp wit and sound disposition of things. "Grampa drank his last at the ripe age of 101."

In short, food and drink are the twin towers of a healthy diet. The trick is, knowing how to mix them, when to mix them.

Live, not die, with your diet. So, never leave rice or you will never rise to the occasion.

"A spoon of rice taken with a clover of garlic each night is the key to a good health," said Taby, a wine drinker for nearly 65 years who will turn 84 on Nov. 1.

FOUR DIGIT
0 6 4 5
(In exact order)

SUERTRES
5 0 4

MEGALOTTO 6/45
5 16 19 25 31 43

SPORTS

E-mail: pr_sports@inquirer.com.ph

Assistant Editor **Edwin M. Villanueva**

PBA vs sports media for Prieto Cup

PBA golfers and their counterparts from the sports media begin their battle for the perpetual Leo Prieto Cup in the kick-off leg of the 2003 PBA Golf Classic at the Wack Wack east course in Mandaluyong today. Registration starts at 7 a.m. and tee-off time is at 8 with PBA Commissioner Noli Eala set to lead his team.

ALL-FILIPINO

Phone Pals, Kings replay game today

STANDINGS	W	L
Group A		
Alaska	8	3
FedEx	5	5
San Miguel	5	5
Sta. Lucia	5	6
Purefoods	4	7
Group B		
Red Bull	10	1
Coca-Cola	5	5
Talk N Text	5	5
Ginebra	4	7
Shell	2	9

GAME TODAY *(Araneta Coliseum)*
6 p.m.--Talk N Text vs Barangay Ginebra

By June Navarro

THIS is one rematch everybody wants to see.

Talk N Text and Barangay Ginebra collide again today in the Samsung-PBA All Filipino Cup at the Araneta Coliseum to replay a classic encounter laid to waste by faulty officiating.

MENK

TAULAVA

Exactly a month ago, the two squads dueled in a double-overtime encounter won by the Kings, 122-117, but was put under protest by the Phone Pals following a bum decision by game officials that clearly affected the outcome.

Asi Taulava successfully tossed the ball into the hoop with still 0.2 ticks left in the first overtime that could have given the Phone Pals a clear victory. But referees Luisito Boy Cruz, Joey Calungcaguin and Wilbert Culanag nullified the shot, sending the roller-coaster match into another overtime.

As a result, game officials got the ire of the Phone Pals, particularly Talk N Text governor Ricky Vargas, who lambasted the referees for their poor officiating.

All of these, however, are water under the bridge now as the Phone Pals and the Kings look forward to the 6 p.m. replay with fresh insights on how to outdo each other on the floor.

"Talk N Text has a new coach and some of the players who were not there during the game will be around this time. It will be an entirely different matchup," said Ginebra coach Allan Caidic after the Kings beat Shell, 76-71, to climb to 4-7 in Group B.

The Phone Pals, who fired American coach Paul Woolpert almost two weeks ago, elevated assistant coach Joel Banal as head coach and will have Victor Pablo boosting their roster. Pablo was recuperating from a knee injury at that time.

"There will be no drastic changes on the strategy. We'll just maintain what coach Woolpert had started," said Banal, whose Phone Pals trounced Sta. Lucia Realty last time out to jack up their record to 5-5.

College graduation

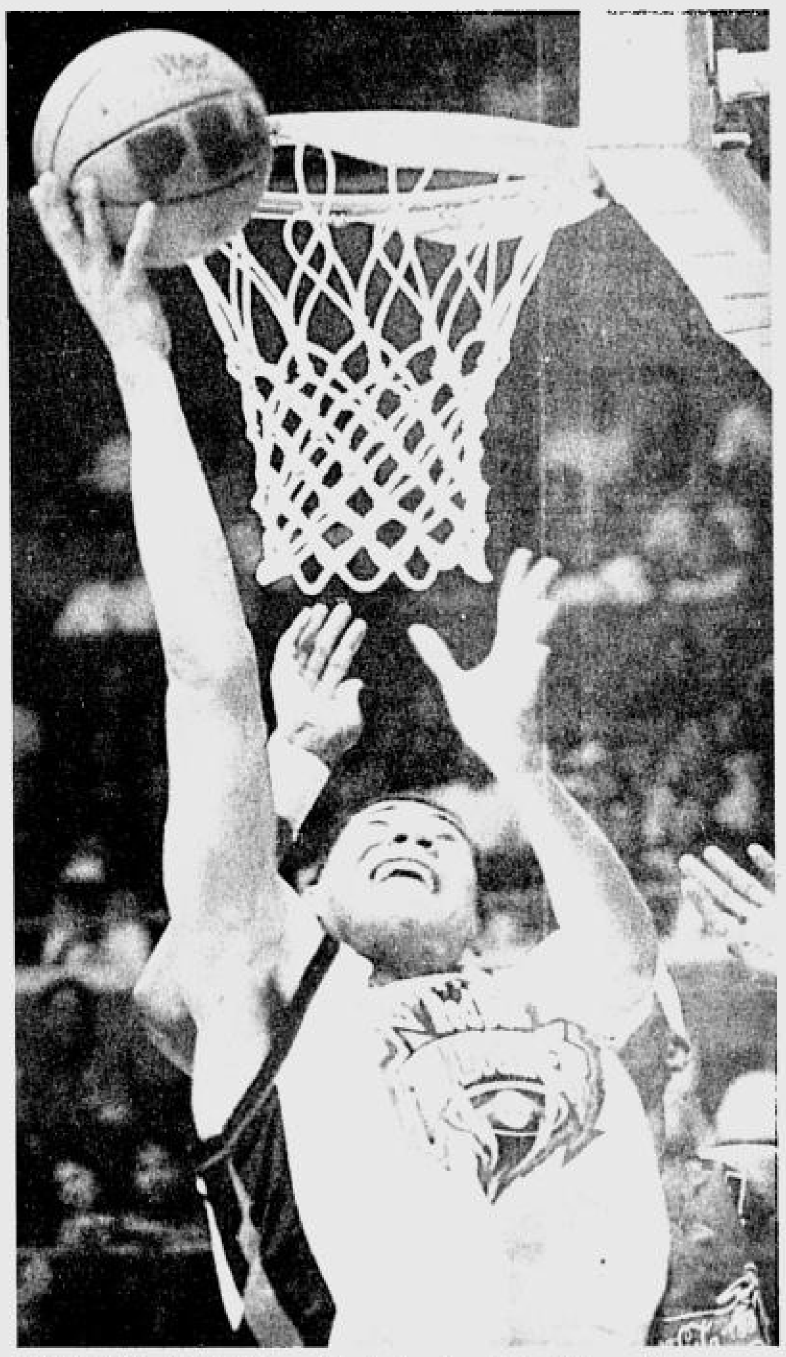
On the Kings' corner, rookie Romel Adducul will see action in an encounter he missed after attending his college graduation at the San Sebastian College. Focus, however, will be on Eric Menk of Ginebra and Talk N Text's Jimmy Alapag and Taulava.

"Everybody wants to witness this matchup but it all depends on the other guys who will step up," said the 6-foot-5 Menk, who tied his career-high 45 points and 18 rebounds against the Phone Pals.

The Talk N Text-Ginebra face-off will be the fourth replay in league history.

Toyota beat Tanduay in a replay on June 3, 1975 after power failure struck the Rizal Memorial Coliseum in the second quarter of the match. Filmanbank edged Honda on May 16, 1978 in a replay following a protest while Tanduay reversed the outcome of the game against Ginebra after league officials ordered a replay on March 28, 1985.

As a special treat, the PBA has waived the entrance fee at the Upper Box section of the Big Dome provided that fans present a proof of purchase on any of the products of the 10 teams, Samsung appliances and establishments around the coliseum.



BATANG Red Bull's Homer Se eludes the sticky defense of Coca-Cola's Rafi Reavis (partly hidden) underneath the basket during their PBA game Sunday night. Se topscored with 18 points as the Thunder won, 102-94.

AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Gin exorcises own demons

By June Navarro

FOR THE PAST three weeks, Barangay Ginebra had been fighting its own demons in the endgame.

The Kings finally licked their penchant for collapsing in the homestretch after squeezing past the Shell Turbochargers, 76-71, Sunday night in PBA All Filipino Cup.

"I know we can match up with Shell. Not to brag about it, but I also think we can go up against all the teams in the league on even terms. We have the manpower. *Kaaway lang namin sarili namin,*" said Ginebra coach Allan Caidic.

These pronouncements summed up the Kings' fate prior to their conquest of the Turbochargers. They lost three consecutive games for the past three weeks, all of them down-the-wire encounters.

"It's a scary win. At least now we have a two-game cushion," said Caidic after the Kings notched their fourth victory in 11 outings while sending the Turbochargers deeper into the pits with a 2-9 card.

"But more than anything else, we overcame the challenge of avoiding an endgame collapse for the first time this season," added Caidic.

The Kings, however, were again all set to crumble in the dying moments but rookie Romel Adducul and Jun Limpot picked up the tab when the Turbochargers were about to wield the upset axe.

Caidic said the win only showed that hard work pays off. He revealed that while the entire nation was observing the Holy Week, the Kings were sweating it out in practice even on Good Friday and Black Saturday.

Bancod stuns Torre; Villamayor still up

INTERNATIONAL Master Ronald Bancod stunned GM Eugene Torre yesterday to boost his bid in the Grand Finals of the Shell National Open Rapid Chess Championship at the Multi-Purpose Hall, Department of Interior and Local Government, A. Francisco Gold Condominium II, EDSA, Diliman, Quezon City.

Bancod, who used a Trompovsky with black, climbed to 7 points and tied Torre and GM Joey Antonio, who drew with IM Mark Paragua, at second place.

GM Bong Villamayor, winner of the first phase of the two-part tournament, halved the point with fellow Air Force personnel NM Ronald Dableo to stay on top with 8.5 points after 12 rounds of play.

Roy Luarca

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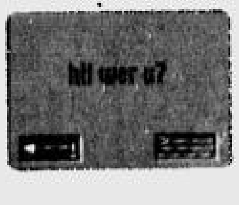
incoming
outgoing
OK

3. Key in your message and press upper right button.



4. Enter cellphone or landline number you wish to send the message to. For landline numbers, include area code.

5. Then press "send".

Sending message

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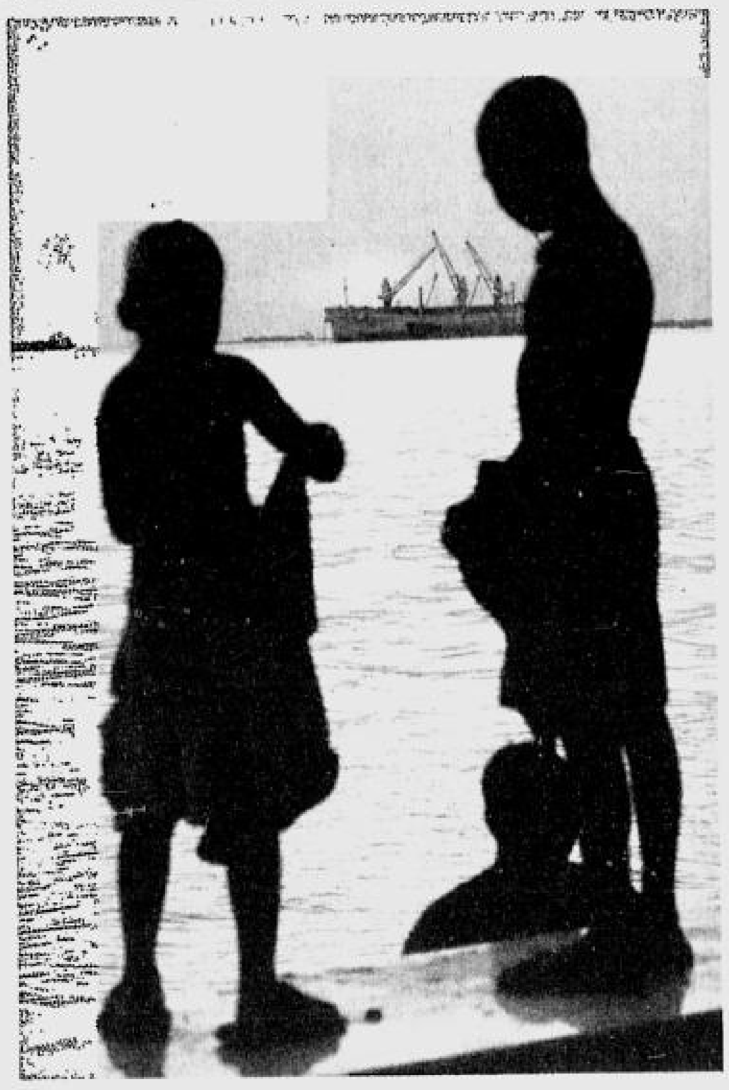
Jalosjos tagged gunman in New Bilibid shooting



SUMMER SILHOUETTE
The setting sun over Manila Bay provides a dramatic silhouette to children who took a dip at the breakwaters to beat the summer heat.
JOAN BONDOC

By Christian Esguerra

AN INMATE of the New Bilibid Prisons on Saturday night was shot in the leg right inside the facility's maximum security compound.

Some inmates claimed that the man who fired the gun was former Zamboanga del Norte Rep. Romeo Jalosjos.

The inmates claimed Jalosjos figured in a scuffle inside the penitentiary, got the gun of one of his escorts and shot Marcos de Guzman, a fellow inmate.

Insiders said Jalosjos fumed when De Guzman refused to follow an order.

But prison officials could not say whether the bullet that wounded inmate De Guzman was fired from within the maximum security area

JALOSJOS/ A27

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Manila pushes fight against street gangs

By Jerome Aning

THE CITY of Manila is pushing hard the campaign against street gangs, the fraternity-like groups often engaged in various crimes ranging from vandalism to murder.

Manila Councilor Don Ramon Bagatsing has filed an ordinance banning the organization of street gangs or recruitment of members of these gangs in the city.

There are at least 30 street gangs operating in the city, according to the National Capital Regional Police Office.

These street gangs were the target of a crackdown launched early this month by the NCRPO.

The gangs defy curfews and also engage in wars over territory, tribal differences and even for personal reasons.

In his proposal, Bagatsing wants those who engage in gang wars imprisoned between two to five years and banned from living in the city.

Those found armed with deadly weapons such as blades or guns would be additionally fined P10,000 to P20,000.

If a gang member or a bystander dies in fights among gangs, those guilty will get an additional six-month jail term.

Bagatsing said all these punishments are without prejudice to those already prescribed by the Revised Penal Code.

Persons who organize a street gang or caught recruiting new members face six months to a year in jail plus community service for six months.

The proposed ordinance tasks barangay leaders to "monitor and suppress" the formation of street gangs in coordination with the police.

Each barangay is tasked to keep a list of persons suspected to be members and leaders of street gangs, and "any person known to exercise command responsibility within the group." This will be reported to the chief of the police station in the area.

The city's social welfare department is tasked to take charge of all gang members aged below 18 who are apprehended for violating the ordinance.

Such offenders would be confined by the department in a rehabilitation center.

Baladjay to stay in prison

By Leila Salaverria

PYRAMID scam suspect Rose Baladjay will stay in jail while her trial continues.

Judge Salvador Abad Santos of the Makati Regional Trial Court has denied her motion for reconsideration requesting the court to allow her to be confined at a hospital for various ailments, including a lump on her neck and increased heartbeats.

Saying Baladjay has not presented sufficient evidence to warrant hospitalization, Judge Abad Santos said in an April 14 order that the blood tests to be done on Baladjay could be conducted inside the city jail and the results analyzed in 'a reputable hospital.

As for other tests needed, the neces-

BALADJAY/ A27

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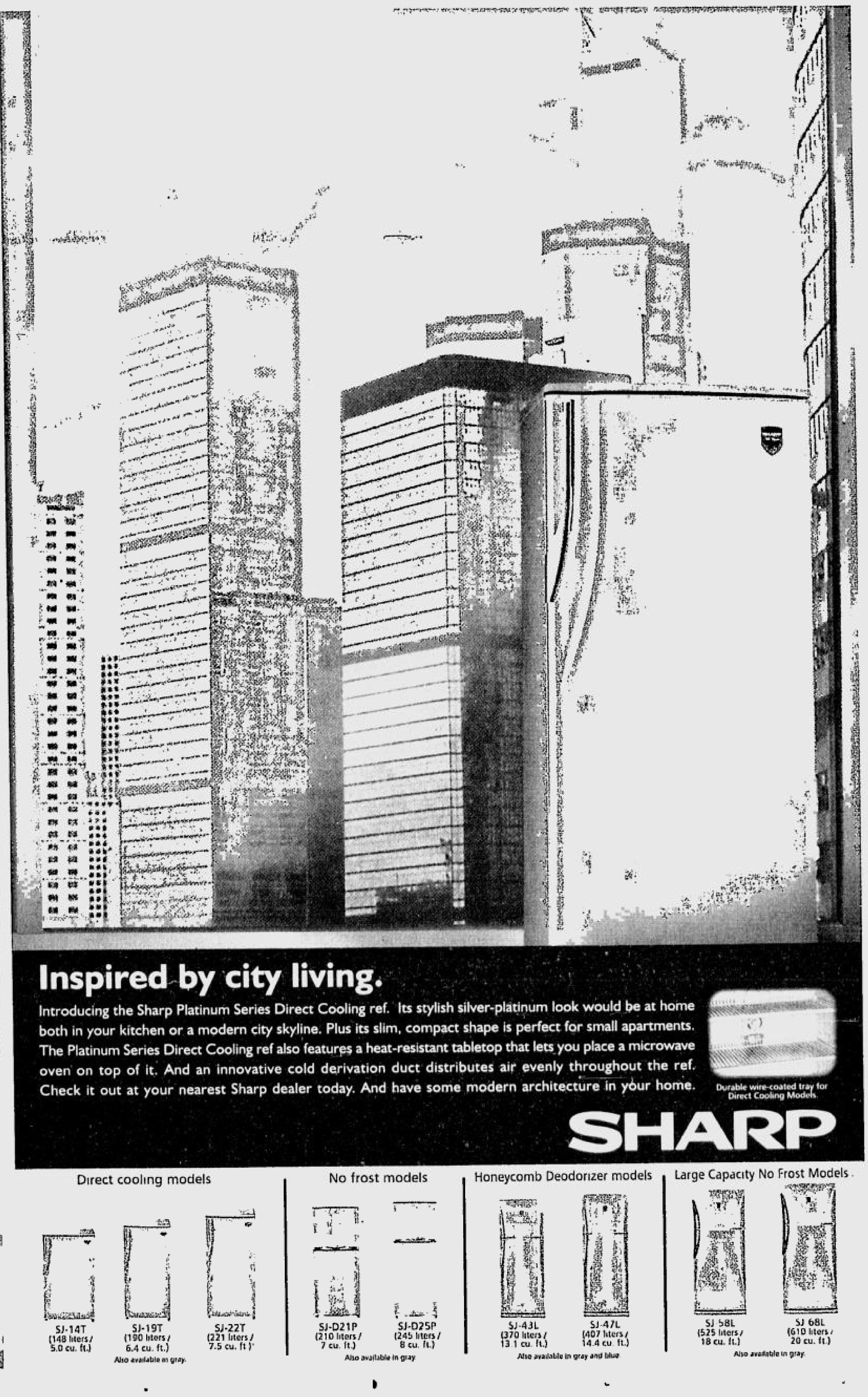
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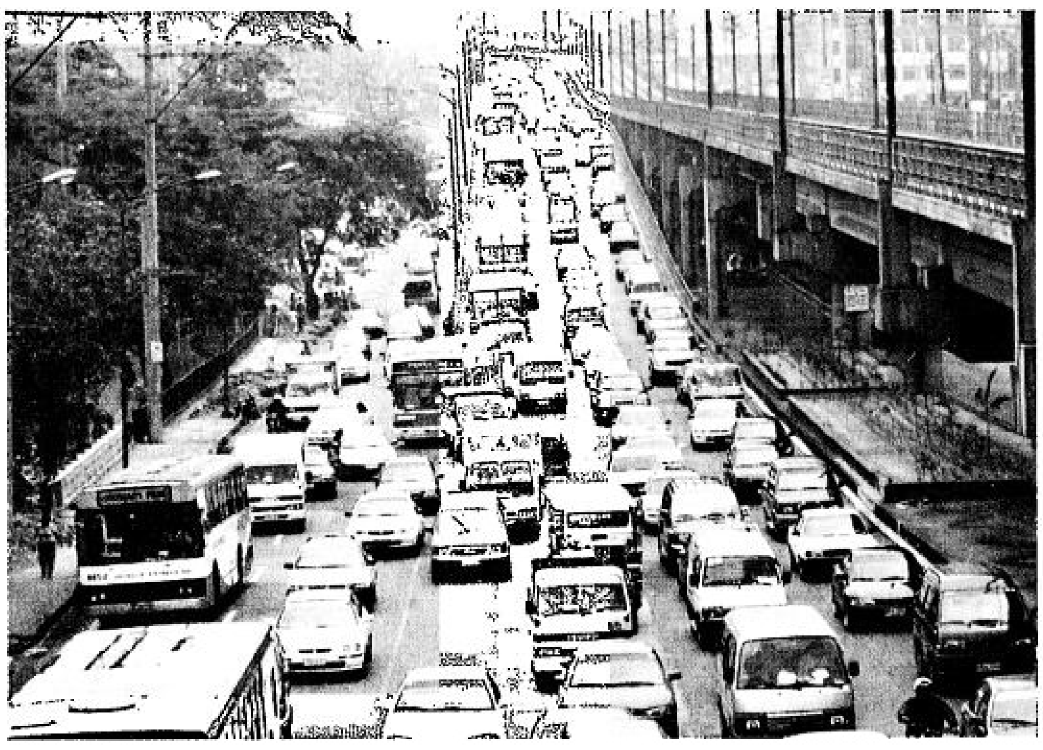


BACK TO NORMAL
With the long holiday now over, Edsa has reverted to its old familiar self, pitting sweaty commuters with temperamental motorists in bumper-to-bumper traffic. JOAN BONDOC

Edsa buses under controlled route

By Leila B. Salaverria

IN ABOUT two months, expect a semblance of order on chaotic Edsa when buses are put under the Metro Manila Development Authority's cooperative controlled route.

Traffic Operations Center Director Angelito Vergel de Dios said that the MMDA is set on getting the controlled route system started this year to ease traffic congestion by regulating the flow of public utility buses on Edsa, one of the most congested roads in metro Manila.

Vergel de Dios said that bus operators are now finding personnel competent enough to administer the system. Talks are also under way on what system to use so that the dispatching of buses would be done fairly and in an orderly manner.

Under the cooperative controlled route system, all buses plying the Edsa route would be dispatched only upon necessity. Everyday, the buses would be "falling in line" at a terminal near Baclaran and given a number. After a trip, they would have to get back in line. Personnel positioned at strategic places would be calling the persons manning the terminal to tell them how many buses should be sent out at any given time and what place is already packed with passengers.

The MMDA would be paying for the salaries of the personnel.

When the project takes effect, Vergel de Dios said, not all buses would be plying Edsa at the same time and fighting for passengers, which tend to cause traffic jams.

Malabon's Vicencio suspended

By Dona Pazzibugan

MALABON Mayor Amado Vicencio yesterday was slapped with a 60-day suspension for the questionable purchase of land for relocation of squatters.

The order came from Malacanang itself.

Ironically, the Palace chose to issue the order yesterday—Malabon's Foundation Day.

Vicencio's suspension was supposed to start yesterday. But since it was Malabon Day, Vicencio would start serving it today.

Presidential spokesman Ignacio Bunye said Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo signed the suspension order.

Malacañang acted on an administrative case filed against Vicencio before the Department of Interior and Local Government.

Post-Easter thoughts

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

ON EASTER Sunday, the INQUIRER came out with a full-page article entitled, "Should the Church be wary of New Age?" in its opinion section. The article, composed of several write-ups, touched on the new concept of spirituality of which the Catholic Church is wary.

Although not a religion, the New Age teaches its adherents the concepts of reincarnation and karma, among others.

Many Catholics and Protestants are beginning to adopt the New Age teachings without renouncing their religions.

* * *

Here are some post-Easter thoughts about God:

A man's soul is pure and divine, created by God from His own Being. His body is not because it's prey to all worldly things.

All religions teach us that the soul cannot die, that it lives forever.

If the soul is pure and divine as God has created it, how could He send it to eternal damnation? He would then also be making Himself suffer since the soul comes from Him.

If the fires of hell were true, how could the soul suffer since it has left its physical body? Only the physical body suffers pain. Italian poet Dante's portrayal of hell in his epic poem, "Inferno," has been adopted by the Catholic Church as its concept of everlasting punishment.

* * *

If you have been bad, your soul will go to hell. If you don't worship God or worship Him the wrong way, your soul will go to hell.

What's wrong with most traditional religions is that they portray God as vindictive, jealous and petty.

They place God on the same level as human beings who are mostly vindictive, jealous and petty.

What happened to the teaching that God's mercy and understanding are boundless?

* * *

If there were a one true religion, and only the members of that one religion would go to heaven, what will happen to the souls of people in Africa and China who haven't heard about Jesus Christ, Yahweh or Allah?

Is it the fault of these poor souls that they are ignorant about the existence of God as Christians, Jews and Muslims know about Him?

* * *

The Catholic Church discarded the concept of reincarnation at the meeting of bishops at the Second Council of Constantinople in the year 553 A.D.

Why did the Church kill the concept of reincarnation? Because it was eroding the belief in heaven and hell. The Church had to inject fear in the hearts of its faithful, many of whom were no longer attending services on Sundays.

Reincarnation is the belief that the soul comes back to earth in a different body after the death of the old body. After each death, a rebirth.

* * *

It's been a couple of months since the story about the fight between two supposedly mature, well-educated and levelheaded bankers, Vicente Panlilio and Octavio V. Espiritu, came out in this corner and in Vic Agustin's Cocktales, but people in their circle keep talking about it.

Panlilio is director of the Philippine National Bank and one of the top executives of the Far East Bank and Trust Co. before it was bought out by the Bank of the Philippine Islands. Espiritu, on the other hand, is former president of the FEBTC, and president of the Ateneo Alumni Association.

The item that appeared in this corner on Feb. 27 was based on Panlilio's complaint filed with the Provincial Prosecutor's Office in Batangas City. Panlilio said he was beaten up by Espiritu when he came visiting the latter in his home at the upper-class enclave of Punta Fuego, Nasugbu, Batangas, a few days before Christmas 2002.

* * *

Reuben Lim, Espiritu's public relations officer, asked that this writer give Espiritu's side of the incident, to "set the record straight."

Lim said: "Vicot (Panlilio's nickname) in his complaint affidavit against OV (Espiritu) for serious physical injuries claimed he happened to pass by OV's home...having come from a party in his brother's place in the same area. He said he just happened to find the door ajar, knocked and was allowed entry, and was seated in the dining room and even served wine. Thereupon, he says OV and he had a heated argument which culminated in OV striking him without any physical provocation in his face."

"Mon, from the smallest details presented, his narration is totally false," said Lim.

* * *

The PR man said that from his talks with Espiritu and his countercharge against Panlilio, "Vicot did not just happened to pass by" but forced his way inside the home of the Espiritus who are not in the habit of leaving their front door ajar."

The reason for Panlilio's "irrational behavior" was omitted from his account of the incident: he was very drunk after coming from his brother's party and was "in fact bringing his own half-filled wine glass."

"You can ask around, Mon, this guy (Panlilio) is known for his drinking and being loud and even out of control when in his cups," said Lim.

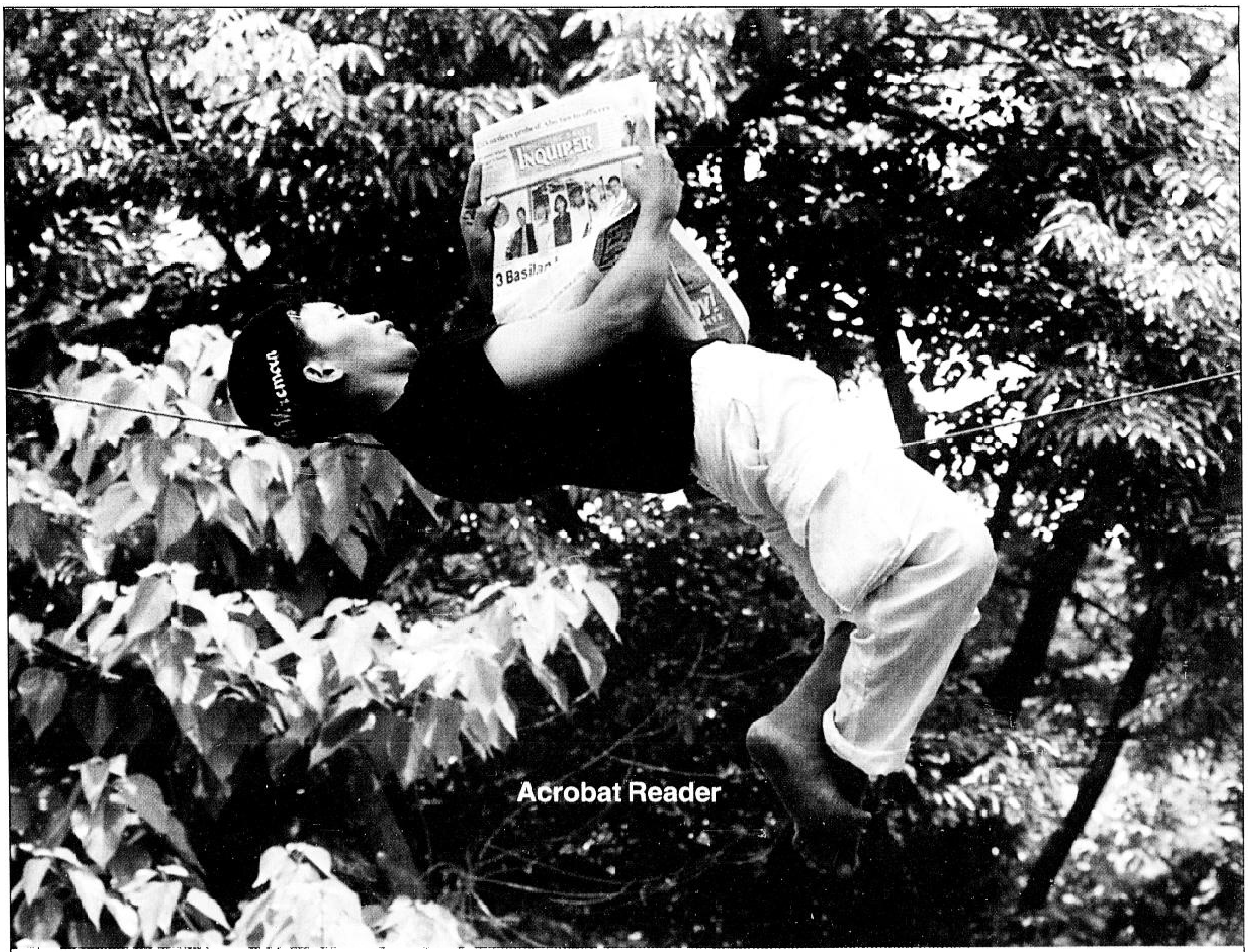
* * *

Lim said Panlilio was not invited into the house, let alone told to sit at the head of the table and served wine.

"He was even told off by Mrs. Espiritu who declared he was not welcome there, but again, he brushed that aside," he said.

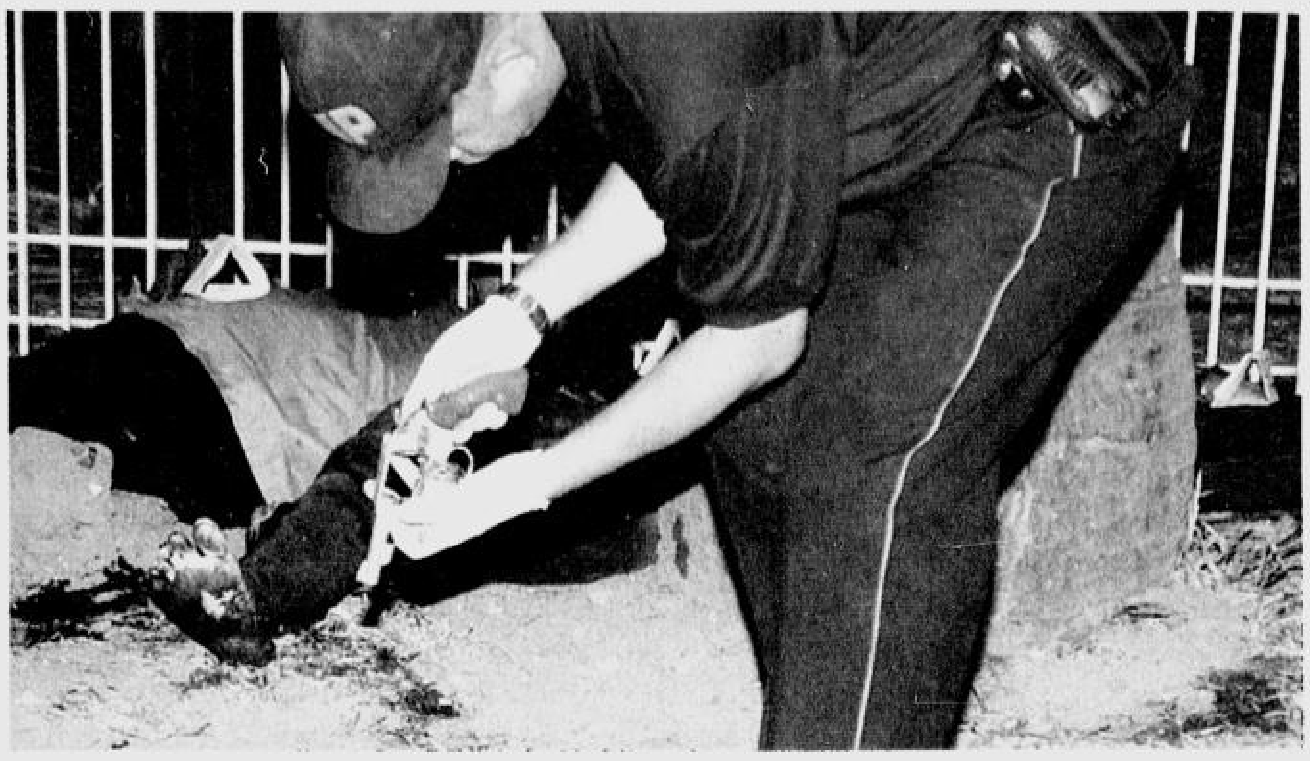
Panlilio had it coming, the PR man said, because he forced his way into the home of OV who was at that time recovering from pneumonia and was "awaiting the results of a medical test to rule out cancer (thankfully, negative, but at that time, his family was understandably deeply worried)."

"Drunk as he was, Vicot was the one who instigated physical contact with OV. *Malas niya lang*, Mon, that OV is a big guy who takes care of himself, an athlete who maintains a handicap 5 golf game," Lim said.



For the past 9 years, the Philippine Daily Inquirer has topped the Asia Research Organization Readership Survey as the No.1 broadsheet in the country. This year, we've done it again, thanks to the faith of our readers, advertisers, dealers, and partners who remain confident in our commitment to public service. We're glad that whatever your reading style, you have made us a part of your life.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
News that makes a difference



A POLICEMAN empties the chamber of a revolver found in the grip of a man who was killed in a shootout in Project 8, Quezon City. A police officer and four other suspects were killed in the same encounter Sunday night. JOAN BONDOC

Suspected car thieves killed in Parañaque

By Christian Esguerra and Alcuin Papa

TWO SUSPECTED car thieves were killed during a running gunbattle with highway police in Parañaque City yesterday afternoon.

Police said the unidentified suspects were burly and clad in blue shirts and denim pants. Police described them as in their late 30s.

Members of the Traffic Management Group approached the suspects' light green Toyota Tamaraw van on Edsa in Pasay City at around 1:30 p.m. But the suspects allegedly resisted the police and engaged them in a shootout.

Authorities caught up with the suspects at the President Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard, just behind the Coastal Mall in Parañaque where they were killed, said city police chief Rolando Estilles.

The suspects yielded two .38-caliber revolvers.

Estilles said the dead men had two other companions who reportedly escaped during the shootout.

The Toyota van, which had no license plates, contained a Yamaha motorcycle which, police believe, had been stolen.

The van itself is in the TMG list of stolen vehicles, police said.

In Quezon City, police are now establishing a link between retired personnel of the Philippine Army and a crime syndicate whose members engaged police in a shootout on Sunday night.

Six men, including a police officer, were killed in the shootout on Road 20, Barangay Bahay Toro, Quezon City.

Supt. Raul Medina, chief of the Central Police District's Criminal Investigation Unit, tagged a retired member of the Philippine Army as the protector and head of the crime group that shot it out with lawmen the other day.

PO1 Aldie Monteroso was killed in the shootout, along with suspected gang members Eufemio, Serge, Edward and Filomeno Pitulan and Augusto Torres, police said.

Sale of NBP land upsets local execs

By Christian Esguerra

THE MUNTINLUPA government wants to have greater involvement in the planned privatization of the 550-hectare New Bilibid Prisons compound.

Vice Mayor Jo Jason Alcaraz yesterday said Muntinlupa officials were virtually ignored when the Macapagal administration announced in March that it was planning to sell the NBP property to generate revenues for the government.

"We're at a loss here," Alcaraz said. "We don't even know what's going on. We just found out about it in the newspapers."

City officials could not make any commitment to around 3,000 affected residents who had sought the help of local officials a few months ago, the vice mayor said.

Residents fear they might lose their homes once the NBP compound is sold to the private sector.

Most of the residents have been living in the area since the 1950s. They are mostly employees of the NBP and other government offices.

In October last year, residents and city hall representatives met with Bayani Fernando, public works secretary and Metropolitan Manila Development Authority chair, to voice out their concerns.

They were never invited to any meeting afterward, Alcaraz said.

"We know the national government is in charge of everything here," the vice mayor said. "But maybe the city should also be involved because any development in the area would also affect us."

In case city officials are granted an audience, Alcaraz said they would ask Malacañang to allow legitimate residents to keep their homes and request that the local government be briefed on the privatization of NBP property.

Don't toy with people's lives, anti-depot groups warn council

By Jerome Aning

GROUPS opposed to the continued operation of the oil depot in Pandacan, Manila will picket City Hall today to urge the city council not to repeal or amend the ordinance that will effectively close down the facility.

The United Front to Oust the Oil Depot—composed of Pandacan-based non government organizations, civic and religious groups and residents' associations—will gather in front of the Manila City Hall at 8:30 a.m., half an hour before the councilors resume session.

"People who remain in danger due to the depot should be given attention by the councilors," the UFO-OD said in a press statement.

The group also warned the councilors not to toy with "peoples' lives."

Shell, Caltex and Petron oil firms have until the end of the month to scale down operations by as much as 40 percent.

The Council, citing possible fuel supply shortages and price hikes caused by the war in Iraq, suspended last January the implementation of Ordinance No. 8027, which converted the depot site from an industrial area to a commercial zone.

The councilors also extended the effectivity of a memorandum of understanding signed by Mayor Lito Atienza and the oil executives. The MOU requires the oil firms to dismantle several fuel tanks, create a buffer zone around the facility, and work for an integrated supply and distribution facility.

The group claimed that Pandacan residents genuinely want the oil depot out of Pandacan. The UFO-OD said some 6,000 residents have signed its anti-depot petition.

Jalosjos ...

From page A25

of the Muntinlupa City prison.

Authorities also have yet to determine the caliber of the bullet and the make of the gun that fired it.

The incident prompted jail officials to raid Jalosjos' cell at around 8 a.m. yesterday, according to NBP superintendent Francisco Abonales.

He said they found no prohibited items there, except tennis balls.

Prisons director Ricardo Macala yesterday cleared Jalosjos and insisted that de Guzman had been hit by a stray bullet.

Macala, citing accounts of three other inmates, said Jalosjos even helped in taking the victim to the Muntinlupa Medical Center.

Macala said the shooting incident could have been leaked to the media by inmates loyal to Rey Yap, Jalosjos' political rival and a former Mindanao town mayor.

"That's the way it is here," Macala told the INQUIRER. "Whenever something happens to Jalosjos, the Yaps seem to be involved. Whenever something happens to the Yaps, Jalosjos seems to be behind it."

De Guzman and his three companions had just attended Mass when the victim suddenly felt numb and noticed blood on his left leg near the basketball court at around 8 p.m., Macala said.

The Bureau of Corrections director claimed none of the inmates heard a gunshot, indicating that De Guzman might have been hit by a stray bullet.

De Guzman's companions immediately sought the help of Jalosjos, their adviser at the Batang City Jail gang, who then helped rush the victim to the hospital, Macala said.

Both Jalosjos and Yap are serving life terms, the former congressman for raping a minor and the ex-mayor for masterminding the murder of a political rival in 1992.

Baladjay ...

From page A25

sary equipment could just be brought to the Makati City Jail, where Baladjay has been detained on charges of estafa for allegedly duping hundreds of persons of millions of pesos.

In an earlier hearing, Baladjay's counsels presented two doctors who testified about the lump on her neck, her increased heartbeats and her depression.

But in denying the motion, the judge noted that the lump on Baladjay's neck has been present for over a year, even before her imprisonment.

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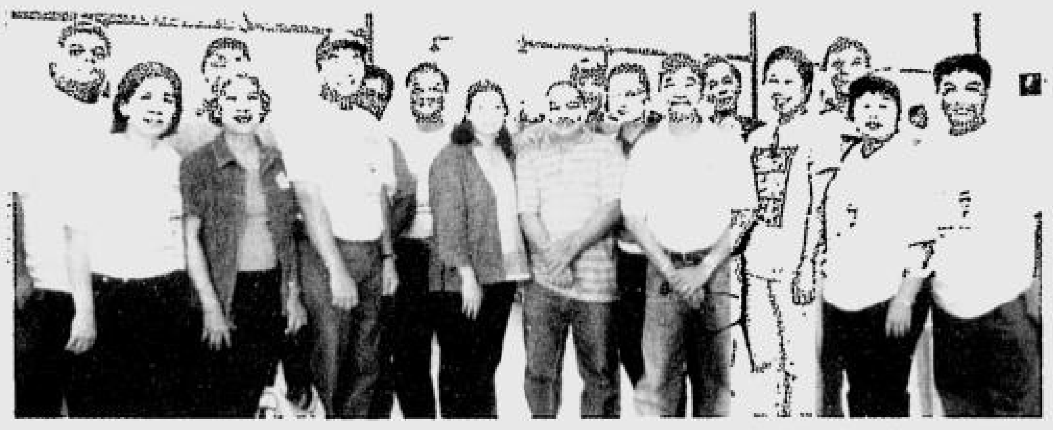
Newsdealers' Day 2003

INQUIRER and IPI circulation staff are all smiles and ready as they await the arrival of the newsdealers. They are, from left, IPI field supervisor Eric Victoria, Roy Mendiola, Roger Fellizar, Regie Delgado, Sonia Whitaker and Nilo Alterado.

MORE newsdealers are greeted by Sandy Prieto-Romualdez, Rene Reinoso and Glo Lardizabal. They are Sonny Manlangit, Manuel Carola, Rodolfo Lerios and Clarits Rumbano. Also shown are Bien Baltazar and Inquirer field supervisor Bong Viray.

INQUIRER circulation manager for sales and promotions Bien Baltazar (2nd from left) welcomes NMCDAP president Ben Tabianan and NMCDAP vice presidents Lino Miranda and Philip Mendoza upon their arrival. Also welcoming them are Inquirer AVP for finance Joey Villareal and Inquirer VP and chief financial officer Jun Ymson.


SANDY Prieto-Romualdez (center) welcomes the officers and members of the Print Media Dealers Organization (PMDO) led by chair Danny Jose and executive director Ric Vergara. Also shown are (from left) Inquirer AVP for advertising Kenny Nuyda, Inquirer AVP for circulation Glo Lardizabal, Ilocos Region newsdealer Lourdes Flores, Pangasinan newsdealer Vic Chua, Inquirer SVP for sales and marketing Rene Reinoso, Delfin Santos, Inquirer VP for advertising Pepito Olarte, Mario Angeles, Eulogio Alfonso, Fernando Ycasiano, Meluna Dimagiba, Winston Pascual, Jocelyn Tutanes and Inquirer circulation manager for sales and promotions Bien Baltazar.

BICOL Region newsdealer Salve Galvan is congratulated by Sandy for being the grand raffle prize winner.

INQUIRER president and CEO Sandy Prieto-Romualdez extends her gratitude to all the newsdealers for their continued support and patronage of the Inquirer. She emphasized the need for a sustained cooperation among newsdealers to help strengthen newspaper readership in the country.

INQUIRER SVP for sales and marketing Rene Reinoso welcomes all the newsdealers as he expressed elation over the support they had extended to the Inquirer over the years.

INQUIRER provincial manager Rene Langahin,awards the second prize to Makati newsdealer Ed Sinajon. Assisting is Inquirer senior field supervisor Resty Lee.

SANDY shares a light moment with Baguio newsdealers Mercy Navarro (3rd from left) and Juanito Castro (3rd from right) with their respective families. Also shown are (from left) Inquirer's Glor Lardizabal, Rene Langahin, and Rene Reinoso.

SANDY, assisted by Rene Reinoso, draws the grand raffle prize winner. Also shown are, from left, Bien, Rene Langahin, Pepito and Kenny.

TAGBILARAN newsdealer Ferdinand Mercado (3rd from left), Zamboanga newsdealer James Hao and Lucena newsdealer Franklin Angulo reports to Sandy Inquirer sales continue to grow and has remained as the paper of choice in their respective areas.

INQUIRER circulation newsdealers flash the 'Number 1' sign as they recently gathered for the annual celebration of Newsdealers Day. The affair was feted with fun and games, sports activities, raffle and cash prizes. Key Inquirer officers led by president/CEO Sandy Prieto-Romualdez were present during the event.

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G4 GLORIETTA 4

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2 PHONE BOOTH
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4 THE RECRUIT
5 EQUILIBRIUM
6 JOHNNY ENGLISH
7 A MAN APART

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GUARANTEED SEATS 3 A MAN APART 1:25, 3:55, 6:25, 8:55, 11:25
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8 THE RECRUIT

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6 WILLARD

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3 THE RECRUIT
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5 THE CORE
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Chin-Chin, a novel you can't easily put down

From page A32

izes. When you stretch your arms to form a cross, it reaches out to others. At the same time, our heads are pointed upward to our Creator and our feet are on the ground, meaning we must have a solid relationship with nature, too.

Don't you have to play "dumb" sometimes when you're with people who are not on the same wavelength as you are?

For me, there should be no levels. Maybe others are just a different "lake" and we will converge at some point. I'm more open now. I want to become a home for everybody.

What's one thing not too many people know about you?

I've nurtured this dream of being a nun since I was young. My mom was a nun in Italy for nine years until she met my dad. I must have gotten the calling from her. I find the vocation so seductive. I sing at ordinations. It gives me an inexplicable high wishing it was I in their place.

Considering how intelligent you are, don't you sometimes get frustrated with how local show biz is? Is there anything you want to change in the system?

Pinoy show biz is the way it was intended to be. Nobody can change its very nature. All I can do is find ways to relate to it.

Show biz is a family with different beginnings. You should just know where exactly you are.

What's the score between you and Bobby, the cousin of Ruffa's husband (Yilmaz)?

We just met during Ruffa's wedding. I was surprised when reports came out linking the two of us already. I didn't even give him my phone number. I was at Ruffa's wedding as a friend. I wasn't there to go date-hunting. He got my number from Ruffa. He called me once just to ask copies of our pictures at the wedding. Nothing beyond that, though I must say that just like Yilmaz, he's very *simpatico.*

You are into so many things these days (She plays the villain Helga in the daily GMA 7 soap "Habang Kapiling Ka." She's a spokesperson for Mother Earth Foundation. Soon, she will be playing Valentina in the Ballet Philippines version of "Darna," and she's wrapping up a CD of Filipino folk songs and traditional lullabies).

I always make it a point to focus on whatever job is at hand. I don't think of work just as a means of earning a living. It's a sacred mission to make full use of my talents. I'm an artist. I won't let anybody, not even my lover, stunt my growth or stifle my ways of expression.

For feedback, e-mail friends_at_dsquare@yahoo.com or jaimealsan@yahoo.com

Pacquiao in GMA 7 sitcom

BOXING champion Manny Pacquiao, the boy from Bukidnon who gave honors to the country when he bagged two world boxing titles—junior featherweight and flyweight—proves he's gifted with a keen sense of humor as he joins the cast of "Kool Ka Lang," 9 tonight on GMA 7.

Mainstays are Joey Marquez, Raymart Santiago, Jomari Yllana, Long Mejia and Dagul.

In the episode "The Boxer," a boxing tournament is set in Brgy. Dagat-Dagatan with a big cash prize and the gang decides to train Jomari and prepare him for the event.

Manny plays Raymart's cousin who arrives to visit ladylove Shermain Santiago. Unfortunately, the lovely lady has an ardent suitor (played by Ruel Vernal), who becomes jealous and challenges Manny to fight it out on the ring for Shermain's affection.

Noel Cabacungan directs.

MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13
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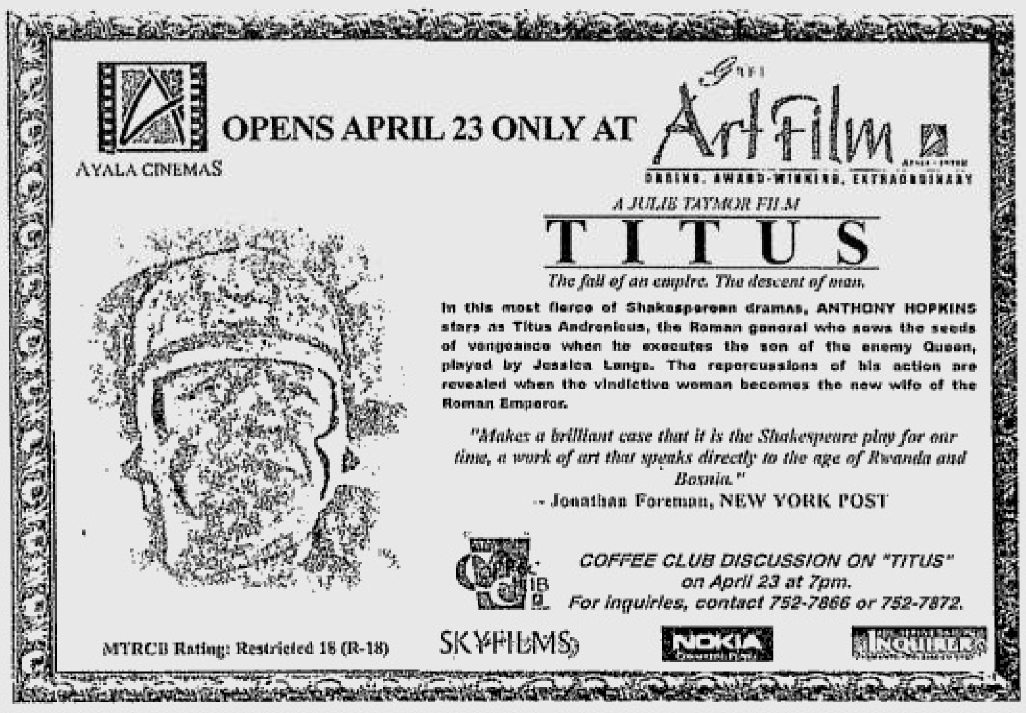
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"Makes a brilliant case that it is the Shakespeare play for our time, a work of art that speaks directly to the age of Rwanda and Bosnia."
-- Jonathan Foreman, NEW YORK POST
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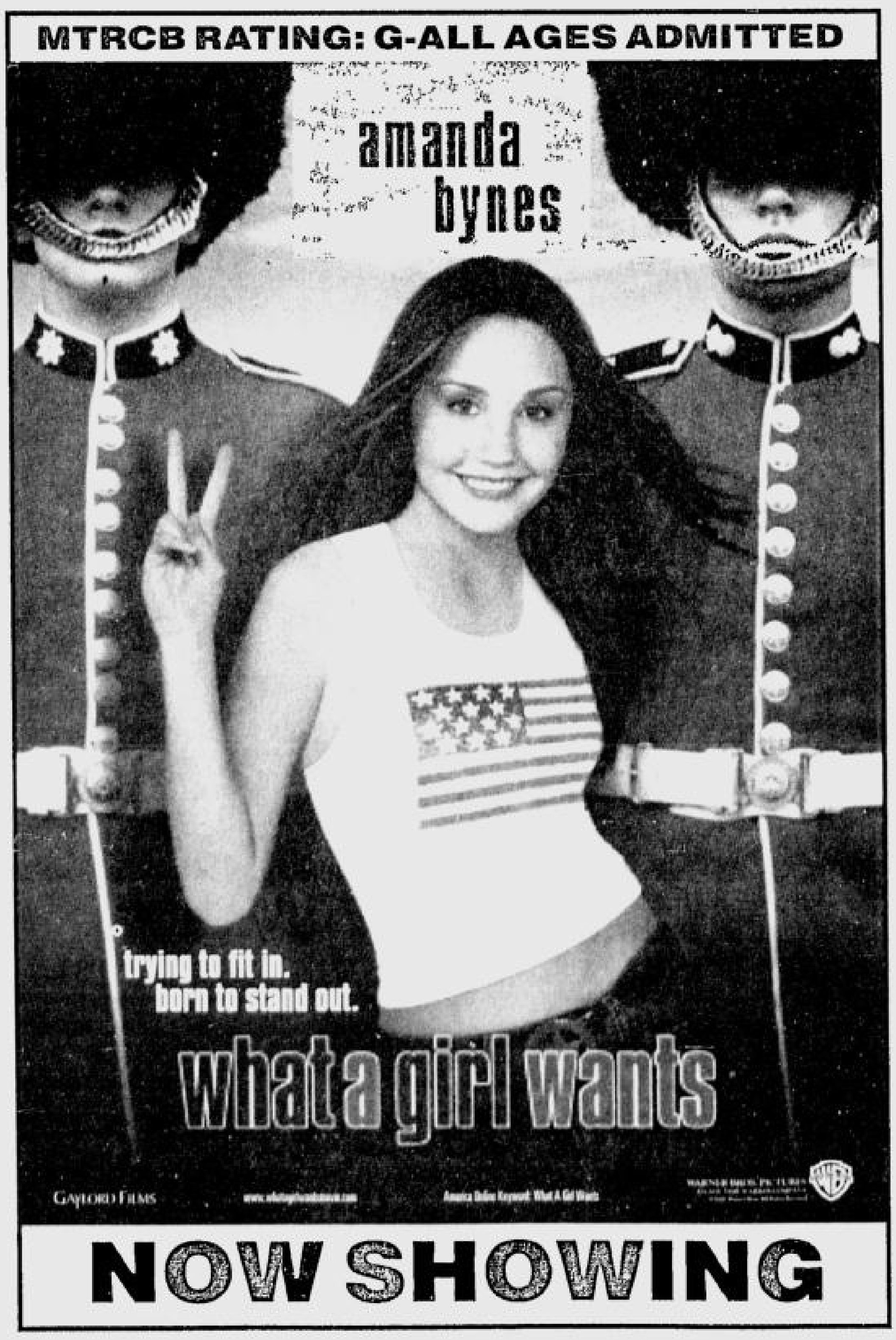
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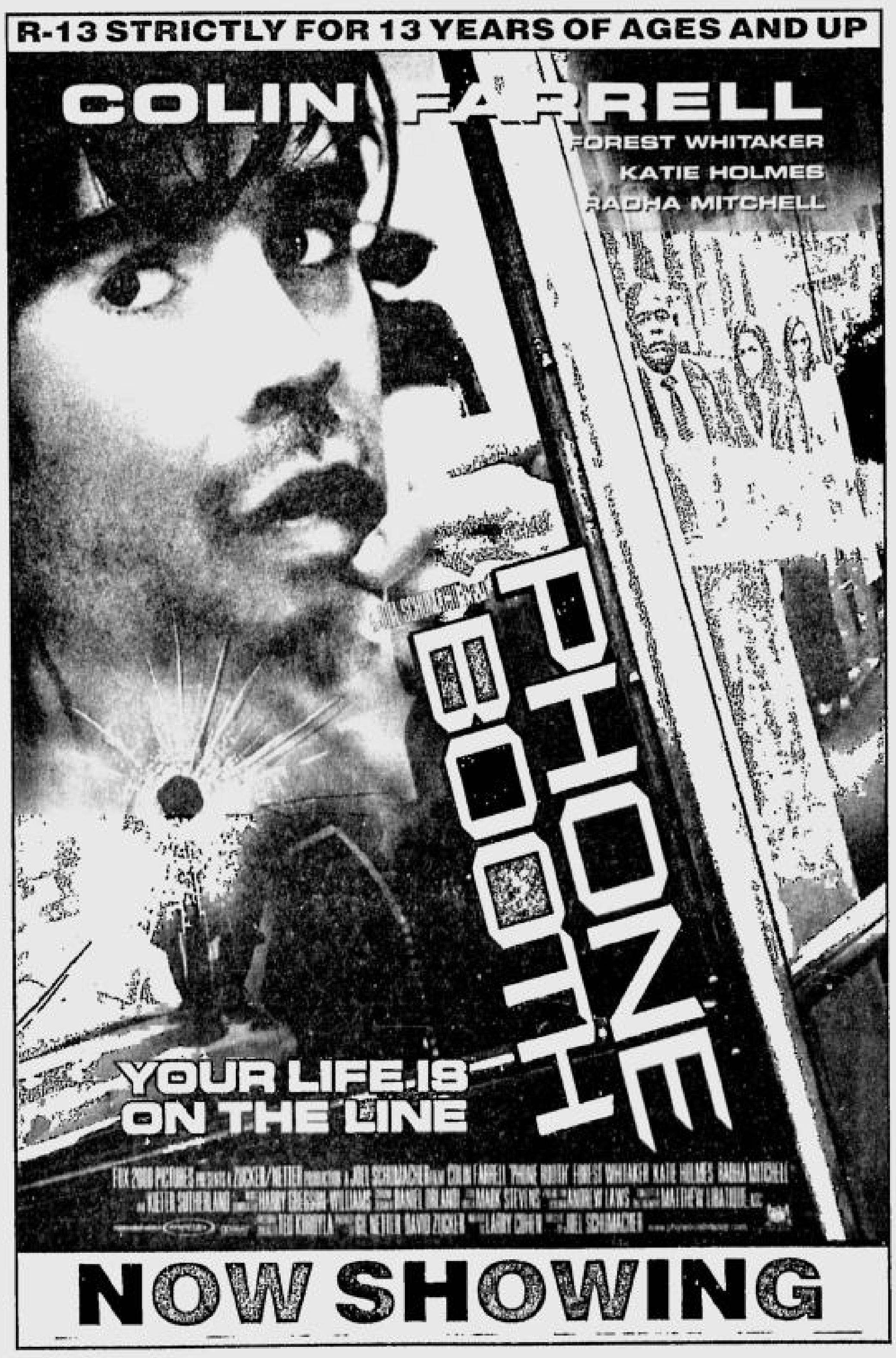
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Wrongheaded notions on TV

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

LOCAL luminaries who appear on TV should be more careful about what they say on the tube, because the questionable attitudes they verbalize may persuade some impressionable viewers that it's OK to be so wrongheaded.

Example: Many sexy stars defend their shockingly daring and baring behavior on the big screen by piously declaring, "*Trabaho lang ito, walang personalan.*"

The way they talk, baring their private parts onscreen is "work." Tell that to the real workers in the country, who live by the sweat of their brows, not on other, more private parts of their anatomy.

And what does "*walang personalan*" mean? If they engage in heavy kissing, petting, nudity and simulated sex acts in the movies, can any of these actuations really be completely impersonal? They would have to be total automatons for that to happen.

No, they resort to the "*walang personalan*" defense to keep people from thinking that the alarming things they do have affected or degraded them in any way.

It's like these acts are taking place totally apart from them, to the actress rather than to the person–an unrealistically schizoid way of looking at things.

Related to this is another questionable attitude reflected in the similarly blithe and proudly impudent statement, "*Basta't may ipapakita, ipakita!*"

In other words, if you've got it, flaunt it. Don't hide your light under a bushel. Be proud of your pneumatic talents. Help liberate all Filipinos from their sexual hangups with your flamboyantly free example!

Yeah, sure.

And, more recently, as people question the dubious decisions of some movie awards groups, we've been hearing this defense of those clearly outlandish decisions: "Opinion *nila yon*. Those groups are entitled to their opinion, so *huwag nating pakialaman*."

Oh, really? Whatever happened to objective criteria and standards of excellence in film work? If everybody's opinion is as good as everybody else's, why have only six movie award-giving groups–why not 600?

The legitimacy of awards groups is verified by the decisions they make. If their awards verdicts are clearly flawed, bought subjective or clueless, of course they should be rapped, shown up, put in their proper place, and dismissed. Awards groups are entitled to their correct and defensible opinion.

The movies they're making

"DADDY Day Care." **Eddie Murphy** plays a jobless dad who puts up an offbeat day care center, irritating his snooty rival (**Anjelica Huston**).

"Freaky Friday." **Jamie Lee Curtis** stars in the remake of the 70s hit about a feuding mother and daughter who swap bodies.

"The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen." **Sean Connery** stars in this unusual film about literary characters like Dr. Jekyll and captain Nemo joining forces to fight a common nemesis.

"Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World." **Russell Crowe** leads a naval battle against privateers.

"Spy Kids, 3." **Antonio Banderas, Carla Gugino, Alexa Vega** and **Daryl Sabara** play a family of spies on a new series of adventures and misadventures.

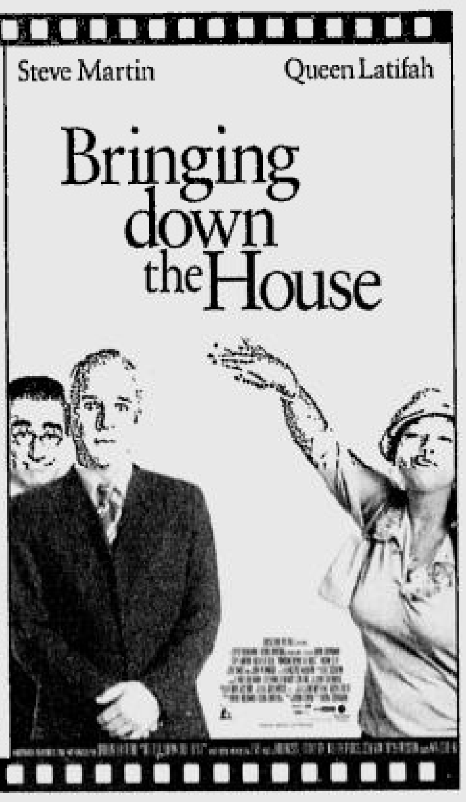
"When Harold Met Lloyd: Dumb and Dumbers." The prequel to "Dumb and Dumber," what else?

"The Lord of the Rings: The return of the King." Due in December.

"Mona Lisa Smile." **Julia Roberts** plays an art history professor with a radical bent. With **Julia Stiles** and **Kirsten Dunst.**

"Mystic River." **Sean Penn, Kevin Bacon** and **Tim Robbins** portray three men connected to a murder. **Clint Eastwood** directs.

"Nancy Meyers Untitled." A bizarre love triangle involving characters played by **Keanu Reeves, Diane Keaton** and **Jack Nicholson.**



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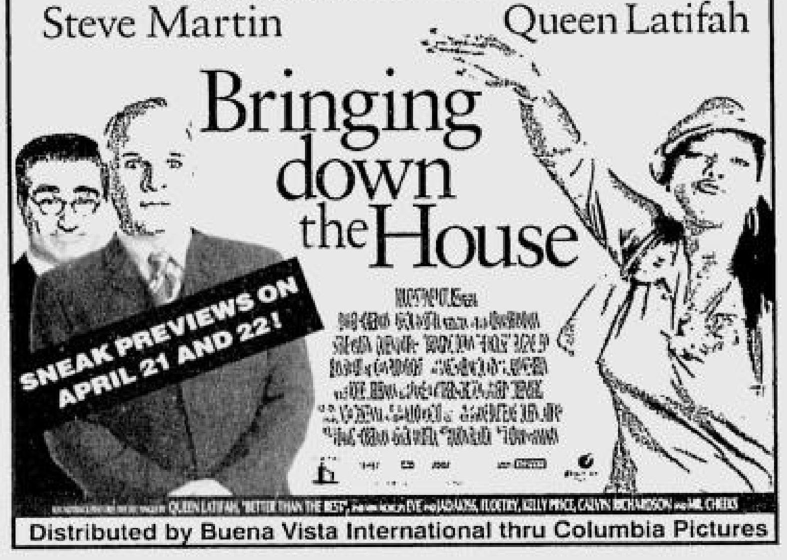

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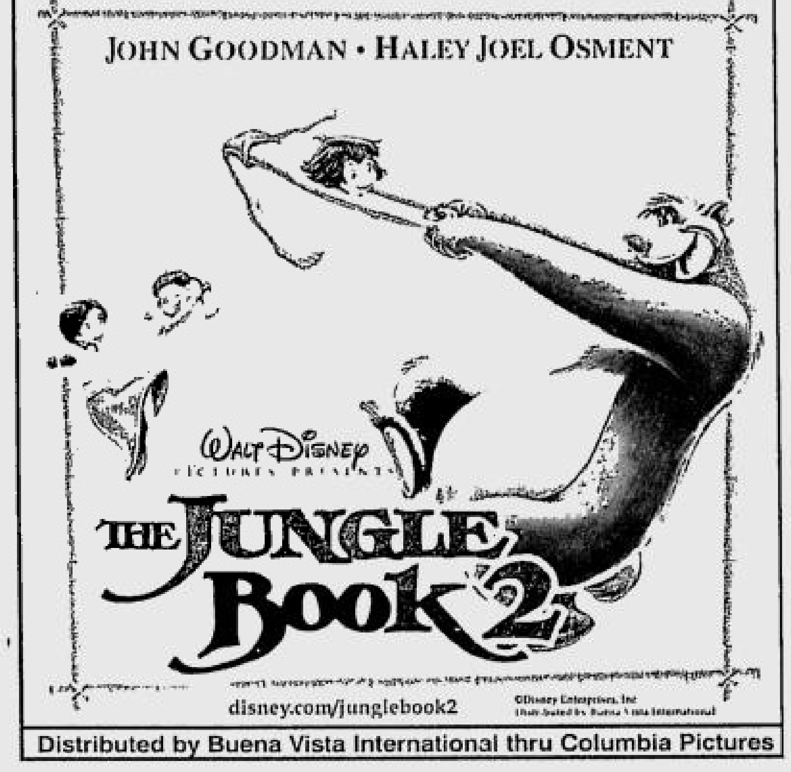

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A MAN APART P13 12:40.3:05,5:30, 7:55,10:20	EQUILIBRIUM R13 12:40.2:55,5:10, 7:25,9:40	JOHNNY ENGLISH GP 11:50,1:50,3:50, 5:50,7:50,9:50

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After a misunderstanding aboard an airplane, mild-mannered Dave Buznik (Sandler) is ordered to attend anger management sessions run by outrageous psychiatrist Dr. Buddy Rydell (Nicholson).

Tortured by Buddy's wacky and abrasive confrontational methods, Dave must decide whether to crawl back into his shell or stand up for himself, and keep his girl (Marisa Tomei) along the way.

With surprise appearances by top celebrities.

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Araneta Center
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Ali 4	THE CORE
Ali 5	KANGAROO JACK
Ali 6	SOLARIS
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Farmers 2	WILLARD
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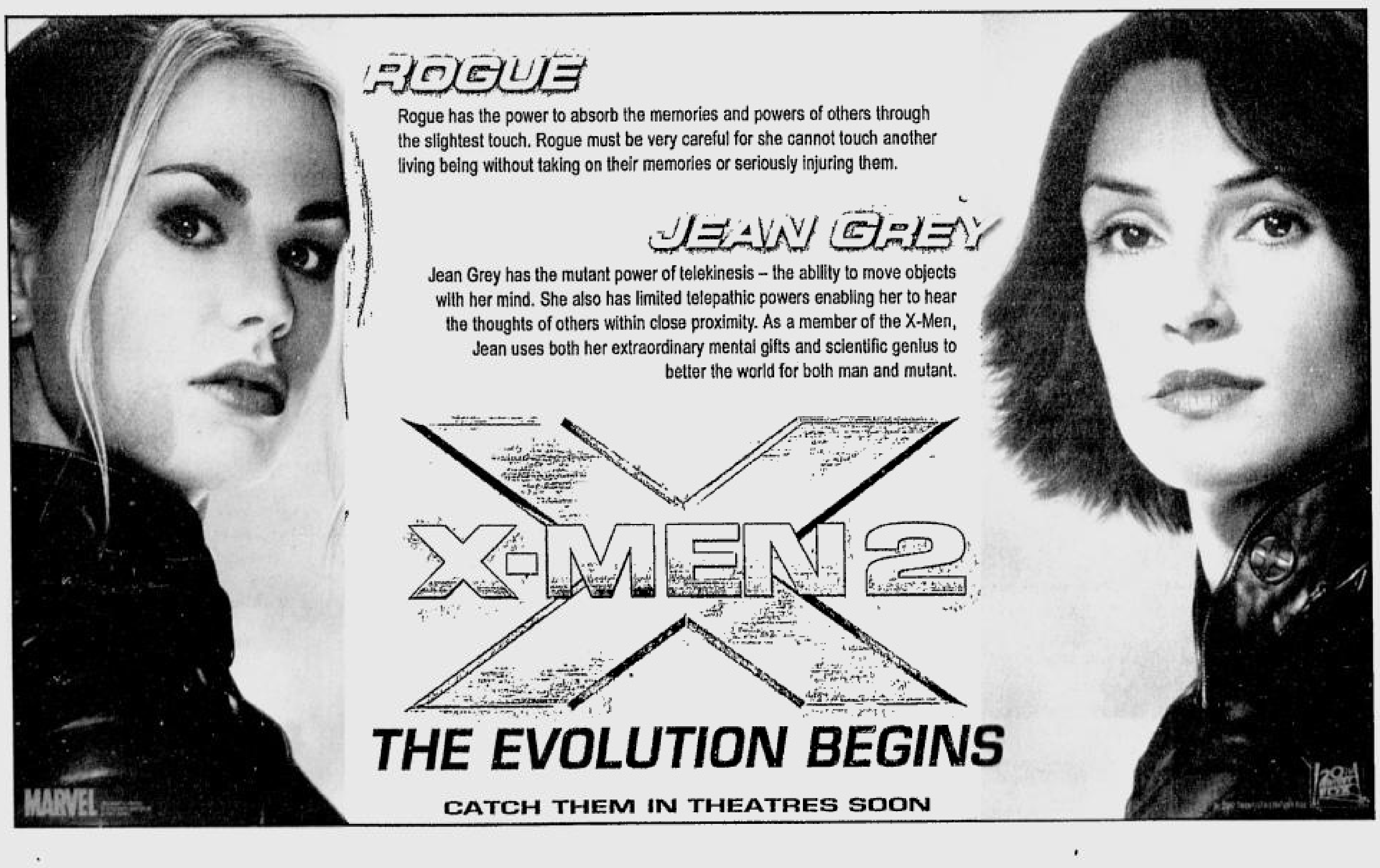
ROBEN	SEX DRIVE
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	[illegible]
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	PORNOGRAPHER / IKA-7 GLORIA
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	VIRGIN PEOPLE
REMAR	SEX DRIVE
REMAR-2	CORU QUIRINO STO
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	YOU & ME AGAINST THE WORLD
B	RAMPADORA
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20 79 ; 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	WHAT A GIRL WANTS
CINEMA-2	KANGAROO JACK
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681 5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	KASIPING
CINEMA-2	VIRGIN PEOPLE 3
CINEMA-3	SOLARIS
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	CORE
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	KANGAROO JACK
CINEMA-6	SEX DRIVE
CINEMA-7	WILLARD
CINEMA-8	KAULAYAW
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	WHAT A GIRL WANTS
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	PHONE BOOTH
CINEMA-11(SDDS)	JOHNNY ENGLISH
CINEMA-12	A MAN APART
CINEMA-14	EQUILIBRIUM
CINEMA-15	WILD THORNBERRY
LORES	
CINEMA 2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA 3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
CINEMA 1	DIE ANOTHER DAY
CINEMA 2	BAHID
CINEMA 3	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA 4	[illegible]
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SE[illegible]



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ENTERTAINMENT

Editor **Louie C. Camino**

'NATIONAL SECURITY'

A hit-or-miss affair

By Ruben M. Cruz Jr.
Contributor

REVIEW

BUDDY MOVIE. Steve Zahn and Martin Lawrence start out as two characters who can't stand each other.

I WENT to the nearest multiplex hoping to catch Steven Sorderbergh's "Solaris," but somehow got inexplicably drawn to Martin Lawrence and Steve Zahn's "National Security."

Perhaps it's because I've just gone through the marathon of news coverage on the war in Iraq and was looking for something a lot less serious. A Martin Lawrence movie is not expected to be the thinking man's movie, so it's perfect. Or it could be the title. A spoof of the current anti-terrorism frenzy is also too good to resist. Who knows and who cares?

"National Security" is another dubious enterprise (in the long history of dubious enterprises) in the action-comedy genre. It's a buddy cop movie (or in this case rent-a-cops, as the two protagonists work for a security agency called National Security) that doesn't leave much for originality. It's got all the standard elements: a dead partner and the motive for payback, a European villain (ironically it's American Eric Roberts looking and sounding silly in platinum blonde hair and fake accent) and his dirty cop cohort, arms trafficking (alloy casings for nuclear missiles), warehouse shootouts, car chases and what-have-you.

Of course, the buddies also don't start out as buddies but as two characters who can't stand each other.

Lawrence plays Earl Montgomery, a Los Angeles Police Academy cadet who gets tossed out of the police-training program for being too overzealous, arrogant and loud-mouthed. Earl is the stereotypical black man who thinks the whole white world is against him because he's black. He turns everything into a race issue, including the poor TV reception he gets in the ghetto.

When LAPD police officer Hank Rafferty (Zahn) sees Earl suspiciously reaching into the half-open window of his own car to retrieve his locked-in car keys and asks him if he needs help, Earl immediately provokes an argument. Hank is in no mood for one as his long-time partner just got killed in a bust gone wrong, but Earl keeps on pressing him until he has no choice but to arrest him.

That's when the bumblebee comes into the picture. Earl is allergic to bee stings and ... oh, never mind.

Suffice it to say that aided by the bumblebee and a wrongly angled video camera, Hank loses his badge and spends six months in the slammer for police brutality. After his release, he takes a job working as security guard in (surprise, surprise) the same firm Earl works for, and the two unsteadily work out an alliance to get the bad guys who killed Hank's partner.

The movie is a hit-or-miss affair. There are times when it's stillborn, when the comedy isn't funny and the action isn't exciting. But when it's on target, Zahn and Lawrence produce some fireworks. Lawrence works best when he has someone who equals his screen presence to spar with (Eddie Murphy in "Life," Will Smith in "Bad Boys," Luke Wilson in "Blue Streak," Tim Robbins in "Nothing to Lose").

Here, Zahn plays the straight-man role to perfection. He also shares almost the same amount of screen-time with Lawrence (if not more) even if this is clearly the latter's movie.

"National Security" is sloppy on coherence and character development but I never expected it to be a cinematic masterpiece anyway. If the movie manages to be a moderately amusing diversion (and not consistently irritating rubbish), then that would be just fine for me.

Just this once, with all the war clouds making past days bleak, I wouldn't really mind it if I don't remember a damn thing about the plot as I head for the exit, for as long as I get to laugh a little.

And laugh Lawrence can make you. Just his physical appearance alone elicits roars of laughter from the audience the moment he appears on screen. Lawrence is an actor with real comic talent, which is not always used to best advantage but is nevertheless irrepressible.

He's quick-on-his feet and has perfect timing, but his best asset is that he can use all of his face and body to tell a joke. When he gets that manic gleam in his eye, you just know he's set to explode with typical buggy energy.

In this movie Lawrence can certainly go for the gold as the angry, crazy motor-mouth Earl character is tailor-made for his loose-cannon persona. He mugs, cavorts and incites mayhem throughout the movie.

Indeed, director Dennis Dugan ("Big Daddy", "Happy Gilmore") seems all too happy to let Lawrence carry the show on charisma alone (I suspect together with a healthy dose of ad libbing).

But if you're looking for something more substantial than the pointless and formulaic offering of this production, you'd be better off choosing another movie to see at the multiplex.

"National Security" isn't much of a movie but despite its flaws, I had some fun. Someday I'd like to see Lawrence get involved in more demanding material. Someday, when we live in smarter, better times and know well enough the futility of any war to stay away from it and condemn it altogether.

But today, I'd settle for cheap laughs from an outrageous comic and his goofy shtick. Maybe it's a sign of desperation. Or maybe Lawrence acting the fool exudes more pathos and emotional depth than George W. Bush acting like the US president.

Chin-Chin, a novel you can't easily put down

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

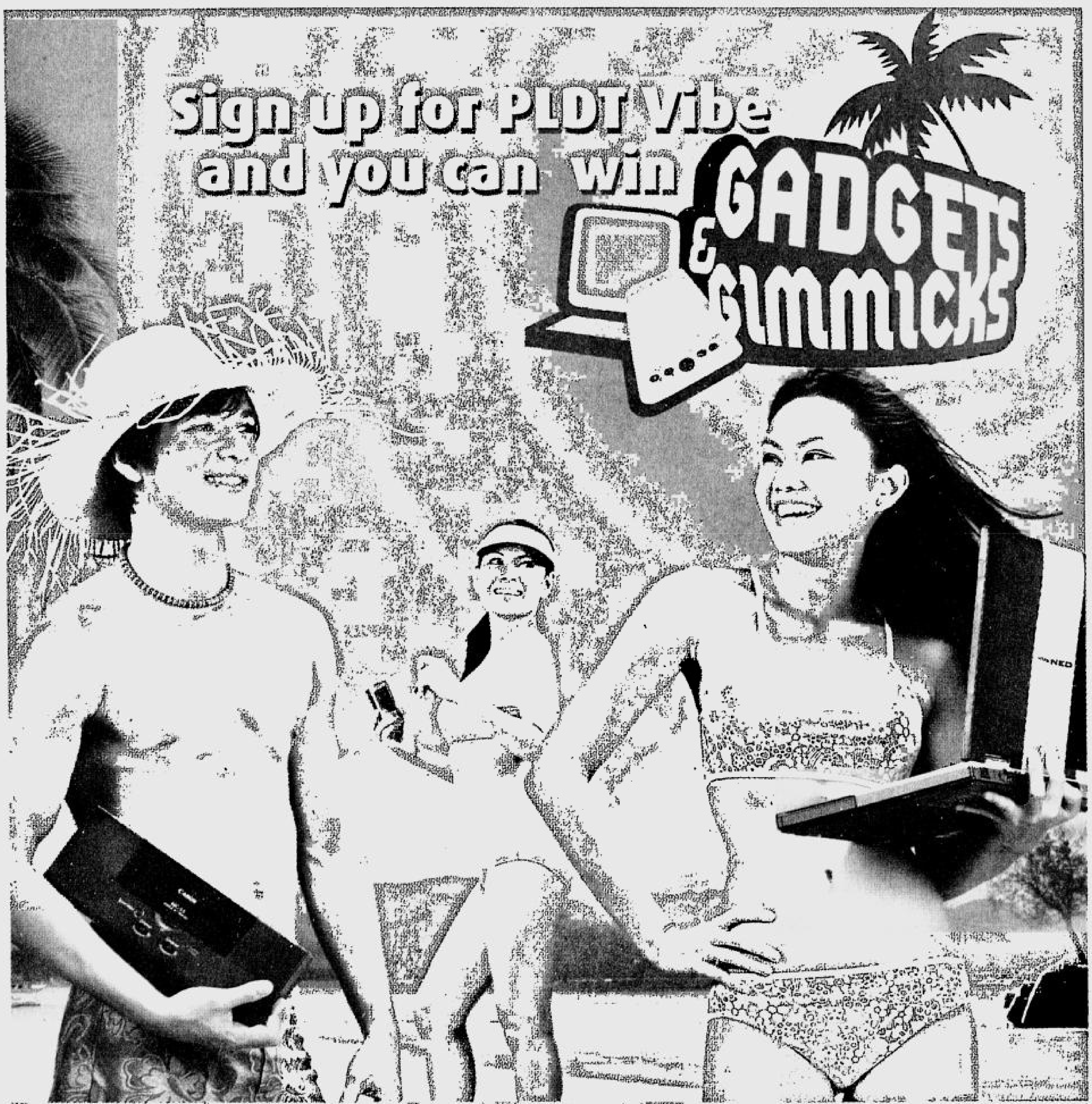
CHIN-CHIN Gutierrez talking is like an engaging novel you can't put down. This true woman of the universe knows what she's talking about at all times.

But Chin-Chin is not one who would try to outtalk you. When it's her turn to listen, she gives you her undivided attention. She's so sure but not too full of herself. What started out as a simple interview turned into a sort of cosmic connection that made us both wonder if we are indeed long lost kindred spirits.

How do you shake off the pre-conceived notion of most people that you have this mystical, *suplada* aura?

Chin-Chin: Maybe that's just because of my looks and what they have probably heard about me, that I talk to nature and stuff like that. Some find it weird but I've always been active in crusades for the environment. And I believe that we must have a holistic approach to life. That's why I like what a cross symbol-

CHIN-CHIN/ A30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SARS to drive away investors from Asean

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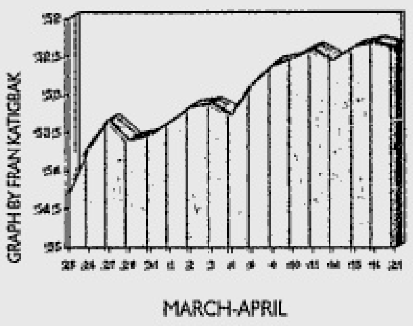

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As of 5 p.m., April 21, 2003

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per ounce Hong Kong, April 17, 2003

STOCK MARKET

Shares up slightly

SHARE prices closed slightly higher yesterday after a long Easter break as investors took positions ahead of the release of corporate results for the three months to March, dealers said.

"Investors (were) looking mostly at the third-liners after accumulating blue chips previously. Some of these stocks (were) at their all-time lows or support levels," said Rommel Macapagal of Westlink Global Equities.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index gained 2.89 points or 0.26 percent to 1,125.22.

SHARES/ B2

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE PHILIPPINES and other Asean countries are worried that failure to prevent a SARS outbreak in Southeast Asia could further diminish the region's attraction for investments and trade.

This was revealed by Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel A. Roxas II who said that a SARS-free status would be a boon to the country's tourism industry and exports, specifically of garments.

Asean has seen its share of foreign direct investments shrink in the past few years after China emerged as the preferred destination of investors with its low costs and huge domestic market of 1.3 billion people, or more than double of the Asean's combined population of 500 million. Roxas said the allure of China as an investment site remained great despite the SARS threat.

Roxas said the Philippines needed the help of its neighbors in combating SARS. "A SARS outbreak could be so massive that it could overwhelm the public health facilities of a country, including Hong Kong and Singapore."

Roxas said he would join other Asean leaders in a summit on the SARS crisis in Bangkok on April 29 to swap technical assistance and information on treating patients with SARS. He said the group hoped to harmonize the screening and monitoring among members to contain SARS. Singapore, the hardest hit among the Asean countries, is taking the lead.

"We are all interested in ensuring that the attractiveness of the Philippines and Asean is preserved," Roxas said. The SARS outbreak has dampened the economic growth prospects of Asian economies with their tourism and retail industries suffering heavy losses from the epidemic.

If the Philippines succeeds in maintaining its SARS-free status, Roxas said this would have a positive impact on the economy although it was too early to tell the exact benefits to the country. Roxas said that among the obvious gainers was the local tourism industry as Asia-bound tourists might consider the country as an alternative destination for their vacation.

Roxas also said that foreign buyers who needed to see their goods personally might opt to tap Philippine suppliers. "You can only conduct so much business through video-conference. Some industries like garments have to touch and feel the products they are buying," Roxas said.

BOI-registered investments up 60% in Q1

PROJECTS registered with the Board of Investments swelled by more than half in the first quarter this year as investors steadily regain their confidence in the country.

The BOI reported yesterday that investments climbed 60 percent to P7.53 billion in the first three months this year from P4.71 billion a year ago.

Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel A. Roxas II said the BOI was starting to reap the fruits of its focused investment promotion campaign, specifically in the information technology sector.

Roxas said IT projects accounted for a quar-

BOI-REGISTERED/ B2

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BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

PLEASE give us a call if you happen to know whoever, or whatever group, is behind this, ahh, "operation" against the multi-billion PEA-Amari contract.

Nowadays, despite the microscopic drop in fuel prices, everybody can surely use a little *balato.* I've heard it is, indeed, a big-time "operation."

The property sector has been abuzz with talk lately on the contract. The Supreme Court will rule on it much sooner than your mother-in-law can show SARS symptoms.

Maybe the "smooth operators," if you know what I mean, have only until 2004 to make good a special delivery to somebody else of a brand new deal on the same project.

* * *

SEVERAL months ago, the Supreme Court nullified an eight-year old contract between the state-owned firm PEA and the private company Amari, now known as Cyber Bay.

Under the contract, Amari-Cyber Bay would reclaim land for PEA at the Manila Bay. As payment, Amari would get a portion of the land it would reclaim.

Penning the Supreme Court ruling was Justice Antonio Carpio, who used to be with the Carpio Villaraza Cruz law firm, a.k.a. THE FIRM in business circles.

The Carpio ruling said the contract violated the Constitution, since private corporations cannot own any public domain. This is big!

* * *

BANKS, you see, being the type that just do not roll with the punches, since they always get involved in cases affecting their investments, are also watching the case.

In the same situation as the Amari-Cyber Bay are many other real estate development ventures in various stages of work.

Now, all those properties in all those ventures which the Supreme Court ruling will affect, one way or another, must be mortgaged with the banks.

If the Supreme Court says that the Amari-Cyber Bay contract is null and void, nothing can stop a lunatic—me, for instance—from filing cases against the other projects.

Thus, not a few bankers worry that the ruling would distress the financial system further. As it is, the banks are saddled with hundreds of billions of bad loans.

* * *

BILLIONS upon billions of bank funds, which are actually the deposit accounts of your lifetime savings, are tied with those projects.

The PEA, you see, has been busy doing business with real estate developers for the past 12 years. You can just imagine how many contracts it has at present.

Among the projects is the mall complex of Shoemart's Tatang Henry Sy. It is in the same area as the Amari-Cyber Bay project.

The long list includes DM Wenceslao and Jan de Nul Consortium, Royal Asia, TOA Corp., FF Cruz, Seaoil, Bacolod Real Estate Development Corp., Construction Development Corp. of the Philippines and Ramon Chuanico.

And those are only what I can gather.

* * *

BY the way, there is also the reclamation project of Red Romero in Smokey Mountain. If the name rings a bell, here is a give-away hint—Dos Palmas c/o Abu Sayyaf.

Romero's company, called R-7, got the Smokey Mountain reclamation contract during the time of Kuya Eddie.

Whadayano, at that time, the presidential legal adviser of Kuya Eddie was none other than ... well, Carpio.

Apparently, nobody found any violation of the Constitution in the Romero deal. What do you think—only the Amari-Cyber Bay contract is perhaps *un*constitutional?

* * *

ANYWAY, trying to join Amari-Cyber Bay in the case before the Supreme Court are foreign companies Ital-Thai and Centasia.

They are among the many investors in the project. Others include ordinary people who got Cyber Bay stocks in the market on the strength of that eight-year old contract.

Ital-Thai and Centasia are asking the Supreme Court, in effect, to hurry up the case, please, because they only lose their pants if the ruling goes against them.

Their petition was ... well, it was "noted."

"Noted" is legalese. Simply put, it means it is in limbo. It is neither here nor there. "Noted" is something like, "oh, you're there."

* * *

NOW this state firm PEA came into being more than 20 years ago through Presidential Decree 1084. Correct—it was still the time of Marcos the Dictator.

The PD tasked the PEA to "develop, improve, acquire, lease and sell any and all kinds of lands."

It is an old PD, of course, but even with the new Constitution under Tita Cory, nobody bothered to throw it to the waste basket.

PEA continued doing contracts in the past 12 years under Tita Cory, Kuya Eddie, and the man named Band ... Wrist Band.

All those Presidents of the Republic violated the Constitution. What do you say, shouldn't they be rotting in jail by now?

* * *

ALL those contracts involved payment of reclaimed land to the contractors for their work for PEA, which was mostly reclaiming the land.

PEA paid with the very same reclaimed land, because it had no cash, in the first place, and that's why it had to go into joint venture, precisely, Elvis.

So then, to follow the Supreme Court ruling with the big punch in the face of PEA contracts, the PEA itself is violating the Constitution.

Look, it is paying for its obligation by using the land for which it did not spend a single centavo reclaiming.

Or maybe, to avoid the constitutional violation, PEA must sell the land first, and pay the contractors with the proceeds.

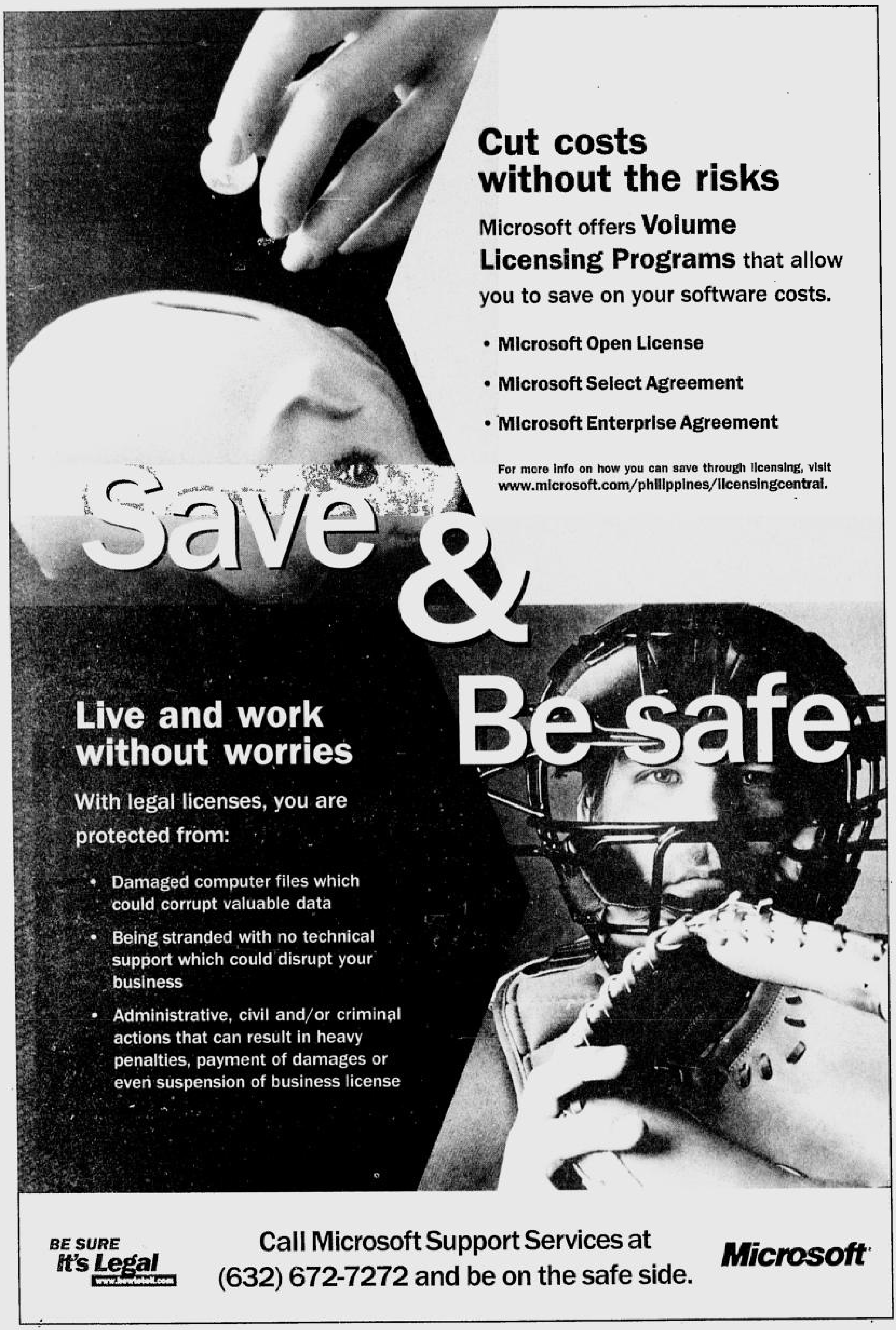
But then again, under the earlier Supreme Court ruling on the Amari-Cyber Bay contract several months ago, which banned the sale of alienable land to private corporations, PEA can only sell to the government, which also does not have money, by the way! And that's why I did not become a lawyer.

* * *

NO wonder then, in business, they are now saying bad things about the Supreme Court.

You hear things about the

RULING/ B5



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BOI-registered . . .

From page B1

ter or roughly P2 billion out of the total investments registered during the period.

The top IT projects approved during the period were Convergys Philippines Services Corp. (P553 million), E-Performax Contact Centers Corp. (P508 million), RHM Teleservices Asia Pacific Inc. (P507 million), and ICT Marketing Services of the Philippines (P230 million).

Most of the investments were registered in January and February as registrations in March slowed down 45 percent to P320 million this year from P580 million a year ago. The top investments registered last month were Coco Davao Inc.'s P136.1 million coconut processing plant in Davao del Sur and P48.3 million research and development project of Hugle Technologies.

The biggest investment registered in the first quarter was the P4.568 billion project of Victorias Bioenergy Inc., involving the establishment of a co-generation plant to serve Victorias Milling Co.'s steam and power needs and to supply surplus electricity to the local distribution system in Region 6.

Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

Shares up . . .

From page B1

"The market is waiting for the release of first quarter corporate results, and some companies have already indicated improved earnings," said Ron Rodrigo of All Suerte Securities.

Turnover volume rose to 276.85 million shares but value fell to P146.84 million compared with 240.02 million shares worth P241.05 million traded on Wednesday. *AFP*

Strike ban bid junked

By Blanche S. Rivera

NOBODY is biting the three million jobs.

The Department of Labor and Employment yesterday thumbed down the proposal seeking a ten-year moratorium on strike in exchange for three million jobs.

Labor Undersecretary for Employment Manuel Imson said the proposal of the Federation of Filipino Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry Inc. was "legally unfounded."

Undersecretary for Labor Relations Josephus Jimenez added that the right to strike was embedded in the highest law of the land.

"What they want will require a Constitutional amendment because that right is clearly stated in the Charter," Jimenez said in a phone interview yesterday.

He stressed that not even amendments to the Labor Code or any executive orders could supercede the right to strike.

Jimenez said that a strike moratorium could work only on a company to company basis depending on the agreement between the management and the union.

The FFCCCI's proposal also raised howls of protest from moderate and militant alliances of labor unions, that said that a strike ban could never be acceptable to workers.

The Trade Union Congress of the Philippines said the FFCCCI should review its statement because this would "not sit well with any labor union or even in the business circle."

TUCP spokesperson Alex Aguilar said the FFCCCI's agenda was against national laws and international conventions, specifically the International Labor Organization conventions 87 and 98.

The Kilusang Mayo Uno, the Federation of Free Workers and the Partido ng Manggagawa also strongly opposed the proposal.

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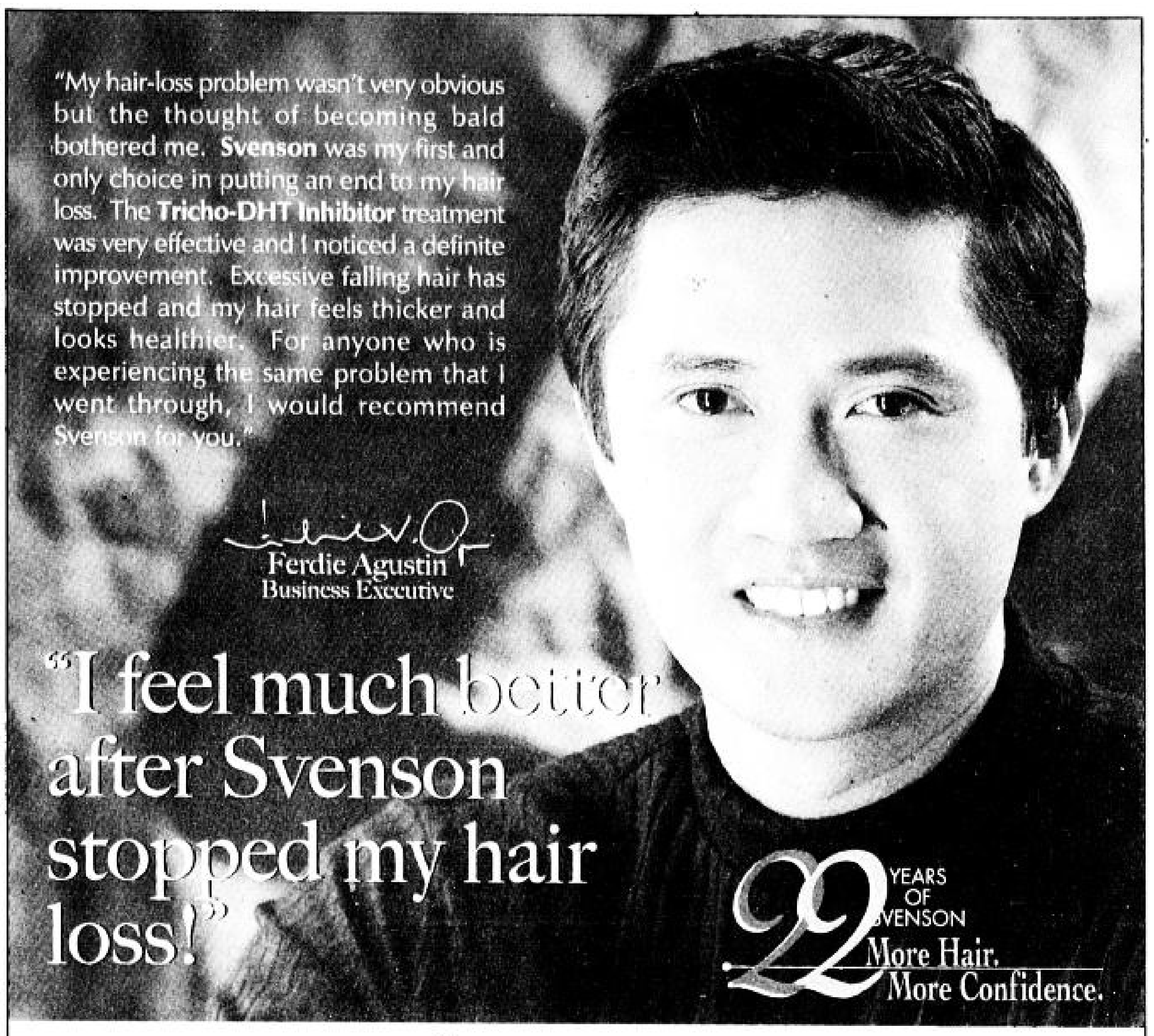
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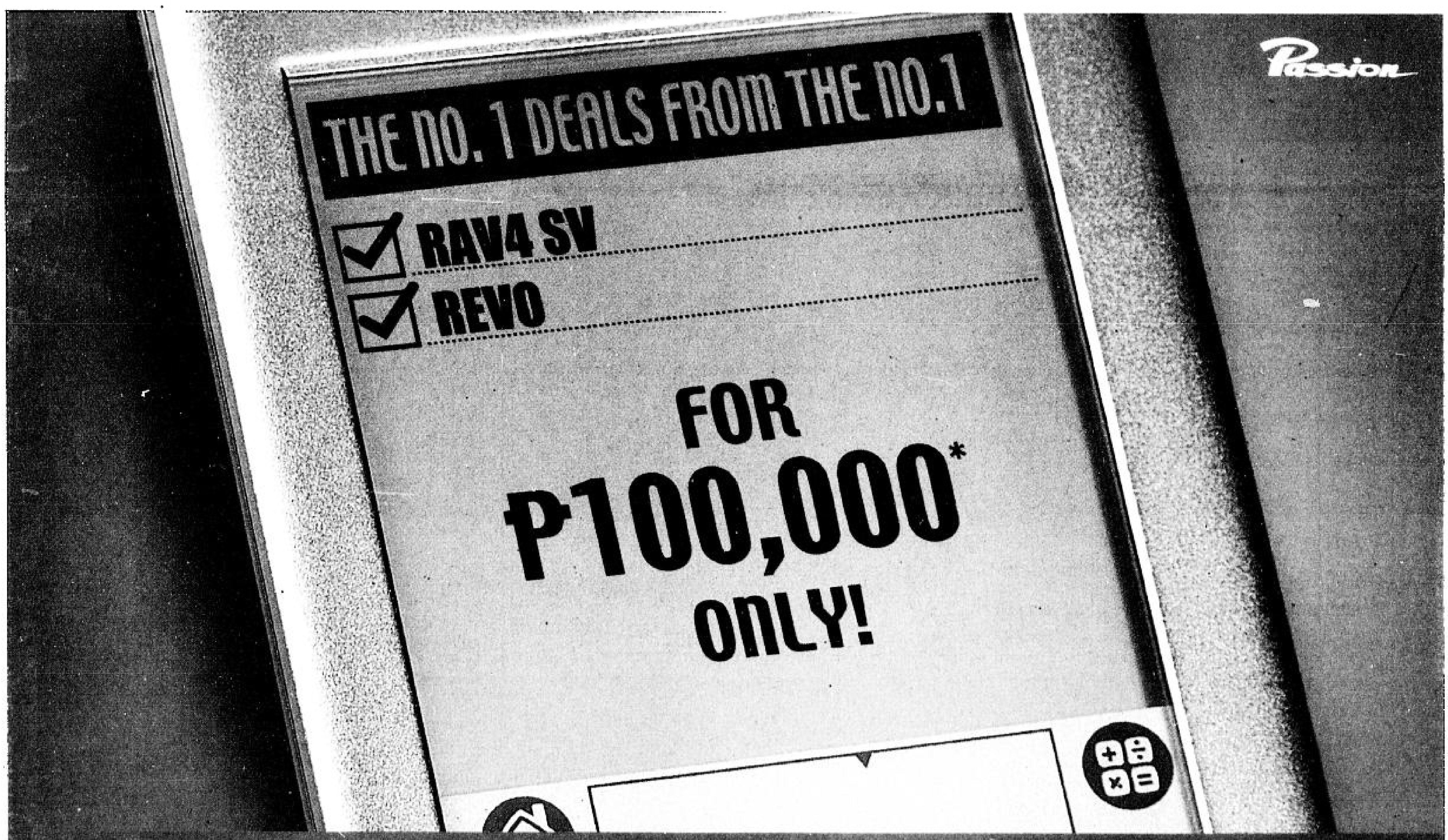
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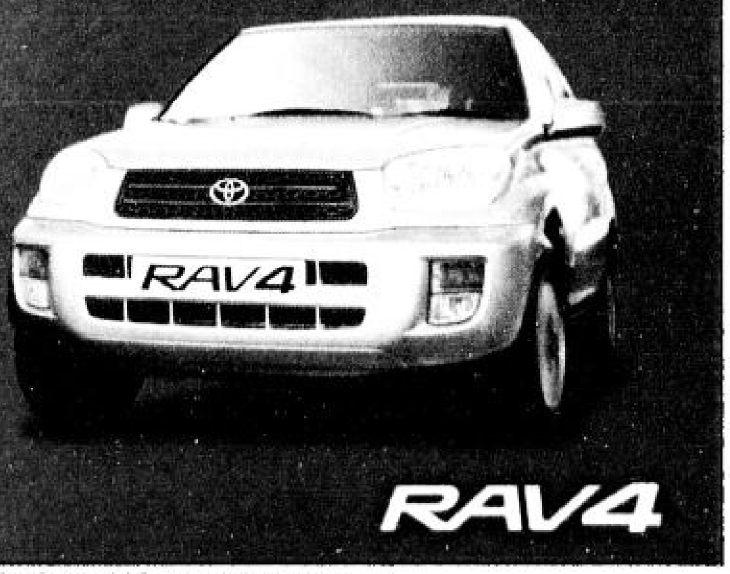
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TOYOTA

PROMO PERIOD April 20 to 30, 2003. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0937, Series of 2003

Sugarland posts P21.6-M loss

By Elena R. Torrijos

SUGARLAND Corp. suffered a net loss of over P21.63 million last year due to high costs and large operating expenses.

Sugarland, a subsidiary of La Tondeña Distillers Inc., is the company behind the Jelly-Ace and Eight O'Clock brands.

In documents filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, Sugarland reported that it sold around P399.5 million worth of goods last year and spent about P387.8 million.

Its operating expenses, however, reached P33.6 million, negating its gross profit of P11.7 million.

Sugarland's losses from its operations were only slightly reduced by P330,931 worth of interest income.

On Dec. 31, 2001, La Tondeña transferred to Sugarland all its assets related to the water jelly business at a net book value of P527.9 million in exchange for 5.278 million shares.

Sugarland's parent company is La Tondeña, a unit of food and beverage giant San Miguel Corp.

The effective ownership interest of San Miguel in Sugarland is 80 percent against 64 percent in 2001.

In February, the La Tondeña board approved the sale of Sugarland to Magnolia Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of San Miguel.

JG Summit net up slightly in 2002

JG SUMMIT Holdings Inc. reported yesterday that its net income in 2002 rose to P2.357 billion from P2.309 billion in 2001, with one-time charges tugging at the company's bottom line.

JG Summit chief strategist Bach Johann Sebastian said in an interview that without one-time charges like a P200-million asset write-down from the sale of a stake in Toledo Power, JG Summit's net income on a recurring basis would have reached P3.2 billion.

JG Summit reported that its revenue in 2002 grew 9.3 percent to P48.297 billion on the back of growth in its food and air transport businesses.

Universal Robina Corp. posted P21.152 billion in revenue from P18.88 billion year-on-year on the back of its regional expansion.

Cebu Pacific Air also saw a revenue surge to P5.157 billion from P3.76 billion.

Cost and expenses, however, also rose to P44.599 billion from P40.552 billion, negating much of the gain in revenue.

Sebastian warned that JG Summit's telecom unit, Digital Telecommunications Philippines Inc., could pull down the parent company's earnings this year.

"On the telecom side, there will be some income drag. Digitel will probably record a loss," Sebastian said.

PLDT still a core First Pacific asset

By Doris C. Dumlao

FIRST Pacific Co. Ltd. said yesterday it was keeping the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. and PT Indofood Sukses Makmur Tbk as its core investments in Asia.

In a news statement, First Pacific executive chair and PLDT chief executive Manuel Pangilinan said First Pacific's focus would be to anchor its future strategy on the two companies.

First Pacific, whose principal stockholder is the Salim group of Indonesia, was burdened by an internal squabble last year over a bid by Chinese-Filipino tycoon John Gokongwei Jr. to take control of PLDT and Bonifacio Land Corp.

Pangilinan led a group of managers who foiled Gokongwei's attempt.

Pangilinan said First Pacific's future strategy would focus on three primary goals: stability in its financial position; clarity in its underlying principles and strategic direction; and, cohesion in its internal relationships.

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1. ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "A"	1,250.000	1,200.000
2. BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	630.000	570.000
3. CANLUBANG GOLF CLUB	500.000	450.000
4. CAMP JOHN HAY	230.000	200.000
5. CAPITOL HILLS GOLF CLUB	120.000	100.000
6. CELEBRITY SPORTS PLAZA	180.000	170.000
7. CLUB FILIPINO	150.000	130.000
8. COUNTRY CLUB AT TAGAYTAY	340.000	320.000
9. MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "A"	250.000	220.000
10. MANILA POLO CLUB	2,400.000	2,200.000
11. MANILA SOUTHWOODS GOLF A/B	500.000/600.000	430.000
12. ORCHARD GOLF CLUB A/B/C	Please call	Please call
13. QUEZON CITY SPORTS CLUB	200.000	
14. RIVIERA GOLF CLUB A/B/C	Please call	Please call
15. STA ELENA GOLF CLUB "A"	1,600.000	1,500.000
16. TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS GOLF	800.000	750.000
17. TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS GOLF	720.000	700.000
18. VALLE VERDE COUNTRY CLUB	150.000	135.000
19. VALLEY GOLF CLUB	280.000	250.000
20. WACK WACK GOLF CLUB	6,200.000	

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NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF STOCKHOLDERS

of
William, Gothong & Aboitiz, Inc.

Dear Stockholder:

You are cordially invited to attend the Annual Meeting of Stockholders of William, Gothong & Aboitiz, Inc. (the "Company") which will be held on ***May 14, 2003*** at Makati Ballroom A & B, Makati Shangri-La, Ayala Avenue corner Makati Avenue, Makati City at ***3:30 P.M.***

The agenda for the meeting is as follows:

1. Call to Order
2. Certification of Notice
3. Determination and Declaration of Quorum
4. Approval of Minutes of the Stockholders' Meeting held on November 11, 2002
5. Annual Report for the year ended December 31, 2002
6. Election of the Board of Directors
7. Appointment of External Auditor
8. Decrease in Capital Stock by P224,712,374.00/ (Retirement of 224,712,374 Redeemable Preferred Shares)
9. Approval and Ratification of all Acts and Resolutions of the Board of Directors and Management since the last Annual Stockholders' Meeting
10. Such Other Matters as may properly come before it
11. Adjournment

Only stockholders of record in the books of the Company at the close of business on ***March 31, 2003*** will be entitled to vote at said stockholders' meeting.

Manila, Philippines, March 13, 2003.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
By:
Tiu, Helen Go
Tiu, Helen Go
Corporate Secretary

The above notice was sent to all eligible stockholders by WG&A's Stock Transfer Office (STO). For those eligible stockholders who didn't receive the above notice via registered mail together with the Form for the Redemption of RPS, you may request for copies of this form from the STO and/or Broker of the Company. This form can also be downloaded from the WG&A, Inc. website www.wgasuperferry.com under Investor Relations webpage

WG&A SuperFerry

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Monday, April 21, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco De Oro Univ. Bank	16.25	16.25	16	16	17,500
Bank of the Phil. Islands	36.5	36.5	36	36	328,400
China Banking Corp.	650	650	650	650	100
Citystate Savings Bank	14.5	14.5	14.5	14.5	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	27	27.5	27	27.5	69,100
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	29	29	28.5	29	95,600
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp..	10	10	10	10	21,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	17	17	17	17	21,200
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.44	67,000
First Abacus Financial	0.66	0.76	0.66	0.74	130,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1335	1335	1335	1335	730
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	0.94	0.94	0.91	0.91	410,000
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1020	1020	1015	1015	180
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	14.75	15	14.75	15	5,500
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.83	0.84	0.82	0.82	9,270,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.38	0.4	0.37	0.38	6,210,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	385	385	385	385	8,400
Philweb Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.013	40,600,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	7.6	7.6	7.6	7.6	16,000
Manila Electric Co. B	11	11.25	11	11.25	402,100
Petron Corp.	2.16	2.16	2.12	2.12	1,086,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	180,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.48	1.48	1.48	1.48	107,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.7	774,000
Negros Navigation Co.Inc.	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	50,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.6	0.62	0.6	0.61	2,890,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.75	0.8	0.75	0.8	510,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Jollibee Foods Corp.	16.75	16.75	16.75	16.75	297,800
La Tondena Distillers Inc.	33	33	33	33	61,100
RFM Corp.	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.76	70,000
San Miguel Corp. A	57.5	57.5	57	57.5	58,700
San Miguel Corp. B	67.5	67.5	67	67.5	87,300
Vitarich Corp.oration	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	110,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	4.45	4.45	4.4	4.4	519,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.44	2.44	2.44	2.44	50,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.027	0.028	0.027	0.028	3,200,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	2.32	2.32	2.32	2.32	5,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.125	0.125	400,000
Benpres Holdings Corp..	0.24	0.25	0.24	0.25	7,900,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	1,010,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.27	0.29	0.27	0.28	5,440,000
Fil-Estate Corp.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	10,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.4	114,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.1	0.15	0.1	0.11	1,700,000
Ionics Inc.	0.76	0.78	0.76	0.76	270,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62	191,000
Macroasia Corp.	0.58	0.58	0.57	0.57	120,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.63	0.63	0.63	0.63	1,010,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.21	0.22	0.21	0.22	8,720,000
Music Corp.	0.37	0.37	0.36	0.36	530,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.085	0.095	0.085	0.095	4,800,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.37	0.38	0.37	0.38	2,000,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Interphil Labs Inc. A	1.92	1.92	1.92	1.92	7,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.34	1.42	1.24	1.42	1,321,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	400,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	16.75	16.75	16.75	16.75	10,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.36	0.45	0.36	0.45	25,960,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp..	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	40,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	15	15	14.75	15	402,700
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.4	5.5	5.4	5.4	2,414,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.175	0.2	0.175	0.2	5,890,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.18	0.2	0.18	0.195	23,820,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	200,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1	1.02	0.99	0.99	8,860,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.14	2.14	2.14	2.14	100,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.0525	0.06	0.0525	0.06	3,000,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.175	640,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.2	5.2	5	5.1	5,167,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	55,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	61,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.185	0.185	0.185	0.185	800,000
Omico Corp.	0.004	0.004	0.004	0.004	1,000,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	31,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	5,000,000
Pacifica	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	2,000,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.04	0.045	0.035	0.045	1,600,000
South China Resources Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	20,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc	1,162,810	19,304,830.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	128,923,600	72,131,110.00
PRO	50,091,000	54,650,500.00
Mining	56,861,000	391,440.00
OIL	39,620,000	206,700.00
GRAND TOTALS:	276,658,410	146,684,580.00

	AVERAGES	
Bank & Fin Svc	374.31	UP 1.38
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,646.89	UP 4.42
PRO	475.19	UP 0.78
Mining	1,151.15	DOWN 2.35
OIL	1.33	UP 0.01
All Shares Index	680.70	DOWN 12.50
Composite	1,125.22	UP 2.89

NO. OF ADVANCES: 34; NO. OF DECLINES: 19; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 24; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 77; NO. OF TRADES: 1,692

CURRENCIES

April 21, 2003 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.918695	1.000000	52.272000
Japan	Yen	0.007672	0.008351	0.436500
United Kingdom	Pound	1.443638	1.571400	82.140200
Hongkong	Dollar	0.117791	0.128215	6.702100
Switzerland	Franc	0.665239	0.724113	37.850800
Canada	Dollar	0.633627	0.689703	36.052200
Singapore	Dollar	0.519742	0.565739	29.572300
Australia	Dollar	0.564275	0.614213	32.106100
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.437052	2.652731	138.663600
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.244986	0.266667	13.939200
Brunei	Dollar	0.518276	0.564143	29.488900
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000106	0.000115	0.006000
Thailand	Baht	0.021495	0.023397	1.223000
UAE	Dirham	0.250135	0.272272	14.232200
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.088500	56.898100
Argentina	Peso	0.314622	0.342466	17.901400
Brazil	REAL	0.302900	0.329707	17.234400
Denmark	Kroner	0.134686	0.146606	7.663400
India	Rupee	0.019448	0.021169	1.106500
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.241794	0.263193	13.757600
Mexico	New Peso	0.087229	0.094949	4.963200
New Zealand	Dollar	0.510528	0.555710	29.048100
Norway	Kroner	0.127189	0.138445	7.236800
Pakistan	Rupee	0.015899	0.017306	0.904600
South Africa	Rand	0.120564	0.131234	6.859900
Korea	Won	0.000763	0.000831	0.043400
Sweden	Kroner	0.109159	0.118820	6.211000
Syria	Pound	0.021874	0.023810	1.244600
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.026498	0.028843	1.507700
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000576	0.000627	0.032800

INTEREST RATES

April 21, 2003
MART 1 Rates

Benchmark Interest Rates	MART1 April 21, 2003 (%)	MART1 April 16, 2003 (%)
1 Month	8.1833	8.0818
3 Months	8.4568	8.0318
6 Months	8.8135	8.6692
1 Year	9.6346	9.5115
2 Years	10.7788	10.6354
3 Years	11.7577	11.6154
4 Years	12.6885	12.5288
5 Years	13.1135	12.7500
7 Years	13.5539	13.2769
10 Years	13.7577	13.3654
20 Years	13.9500	13.7135
25 Years	14.3904	14.1673

SOURCE: MART/BLOOMBERG

Union Cement renews Phinma group contract

By Doris C. Dumlao

UNION Cement Corp., the country's most profitable cement firm, has renewed for five more years its management contract with key shareholder Phinma.

Union Cement's management contract with Phinma was supposed to end in July last year.

Phinma is a leading management company with interests in about 40 corporations.

It has interests in cement, steel and other construction materials, paper and packaging, energy, and property development.

Union Cement has one of the biggest cement plans in the Visayas and Mindanao and one of the widest networks among cement makers in the Philippines.

Union Cement, which was put up in 1998 from the combined resources of Phinma and Swiss cement giant Holderank Financiere Glaris Ltd., recently acquired 88 percent of affiliate Alsons Cement Corp.

The company said it had no plans to give Alsons financial support, but it was willing to help Alsons raise funds to restructure its debts.

In November, Union Cement redeemed P1.25 billion of P3.2 billion worth of long-term commercial papers.

It expects to settle another P850 million worth of debt papers falling due this year.

Task force created to probe ₱9-B disparity in fees, charges

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE DEVELOPMENT Budget Coordination Committee has created a task force to investigate a P9-billion disparity in the fees and charges reported by the Bureau of Treasury and the government's income-generating agencies.

Unless reconciled, the numbers may jack up last year's budget deficit by about P9 billion from an earlier-reported P210.7 billion.

In an interview yesterday, Budget Secretary and DBCC Chair Emilia Boncodin said the government was trying to reconcile the difference between the income from fees and charges booked by the Treasury and the much lower number reported by the agencies.

Based on the Treasury's cash operations report, revenues from fees and charges in 2002 reached P21 billion. Another report, however, placed the agencies' revenues at only P12 billion.

"The DBCC has created a task force, but it has yet to submit a report. The group was primarily tasked to determine whether agencies were complying with (Executive Order) 197 and, in the process, also find out why there is always a disparity in the reported numbers," Boncodin said.

EO 197, signed by former President Joseph Estrada, required income-generating agencies to raise their charges by 10 percent.

Boncodin said based on the task force's initial report, most of the agencies were complying with the executive order. "We just want to know why the numbers do not reconcile," she said.

National Treasurer Sergio Edeza explained that the P21 billion represented cash received by the Treasury last year. Any disparity, he said, might just be on the classification.

"The disparity could just be the delay in the report or some items were not cash but were reported as cash or there could be items that were booked as cash but were actually receivables," Boncodin said.

Boncodin disclosed that the government had been struggling with the disparity in the fees and charges since E0 197 was issued, but it was only now that the DBCC decided to formally investigate it.

The government is counting on P21.194 billion in remittances from income-generating agencies this year to complement other non-tax revenues coming from the Treasury and the sale of state assets.

The biggest collectors are the Air Transportation Office, Land Transportation Office, National Telecommunications Commission, Bureau of Immigration, Department of Foreign Affairs, Department of Energy, Securities and Exchange Commission, Professional Regulations Commission, and the Bureau of Customs.

PPA earmarks P600M for port integration plan

By Abigail L. Ho

THE PHILIPPINE Ports Authority will spend at least P600 million on the first phase of a computerization program that will integrate the information systems of the country's major ports.

Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza said in a statement yesterday that the first phase of the project had already begun with the appointment of the Economic Development Foundation as a service consultant.

As project management consultant, the EDF provided assistance in choosing the company that would implement and manage the PPA's information systems.

The PPA has tapped systems integrator Unisys for a "total solutions package" for all its computerization requirements, including solutions for ports operation, engineering, finance and administration.

A PPA source said the P600-million budget would only cover systems integration by Unisys. It excluded procurement of new hardware and equipment.

Hardware procurement is another phase, the source added.

Mendoza said another significant feature of the PPA computerization project was the establishment of an "e-Port Community" that would serve as a link among members of the port community.

He said the computerization program was being done in line with President Macapagal-Arroyo's thrust of making all government agencies "clientele-friendly."

DTI readies perks for bus, jeepney replacement parts

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry has decided to give importers of bus and jeepney replacement parts a half-year duty-free perk, even as public transport groups press their demand for higher fares.

Trade Secretary Manuel Roxas II said in an interview yesterday that the zero duty on frequently used spare parts of buses and jeepneys was not a "carrot" to discourage transport groups from seeking a fare hike.

"We are not doing this only for the near-term impact on transport fares. Our prime concern is to improve our competitiveness, particularly in labor cost," Roxas said.

Since the minimum transport fare is a key element in the calculation of minimum wages, Roxas said keeping the cost of maintaining public-utility vehicles would ease demand for a fare hike and lessen the pressure for labor unions to press for higher salaries.

Roxas said the decision to raise or maintain transport fares was entirely up to the Land Transport Franchise and Regulatory Board.

Ruling with . . .

From page B2

Amari-Cyber Bay ruling as a clear case or "competitive elimination," or "singling out," or "who stands to gain."

Cyber Bay, as I indicated, is a listed company. It has thousands of stockholders. The minority stockholders, unfortunately, are the most suspicious lot.

Well, they already know they are the biggest losers in the Supreme Court ruling. And so market is abuzz about who is going to be the biggest gainer.

Who knows, before 2004 ends, there will be a new contract involving the same project, done by another group.

They are saying that somebody must want this contract badly for himself. Or it could be a group, who knows?

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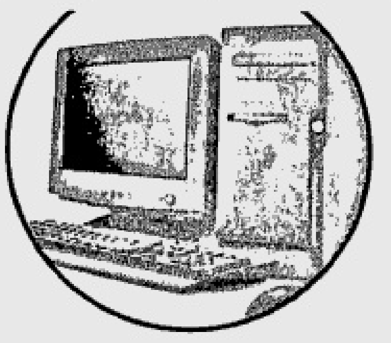

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Touch Mobile invades Cavite

AMID deafening applause and shrieks of delight coming from Caviteños eagerly awaiting their arrival, superstar couple Aga Muhlach and Charlene Gonzales trooped to the jam-packed activity center of SM Bacoor to take part in celebrating the formal opening of Touch Mobile's new cellsite in Silang, Cavite.

Coming on the heals of a successful road trip in Lipa. Batangas, Touch Mobile's popular endorser couple has endeared themselves anew to Caviteños as they announced Touch Mobile's expanded presence in Southern Luzon. The move, they said, will allow more Caviteños from the Silang and Tagaytay areas to enjoy Touch Mobile's service.

The event, dubbed "Kasayahan sa Cavite" was made more exciting by the young audience who eagerly participated in the "Touch and Spell" game hosted by TV celebrities Arnel Ignacio and Michael Santana.

After rendering two songs, popular young actor Chubi del Rosario joined Arnel in the much-applauded karaoke contest participated in by students from different schools in Cavite.

The excitement and fun heated up when matinee idols Piolo Pascual appeared on stage before a delighted crowd to sing three songs from his newly launched album.

The program ended with a long queue of fans patiently waiting to have their newly purchased Touch Mobile Super Value SIM packs autographed by their favorite stars.

Also gracing the event was the official representative from the Cavite Governor's Office Nina Lagac who lauded Touch Mobile for its continuous efforts to enhance and upgrade its cellular network to better serve its subscribers.

Preceding the celebration was a ceremonial ribbon-cutting led by Globe Telecom vice president for Touch Mobile Ana de Villa-Singson and a motorcade by the stars along Aguinaldo Highway.

Touch Mobile's network coverage in Cavite currently stretches over numerous areas including Alfonso, Amadeo, Silang, Dasmariñas, Carmona, Trece Martirez, Maragondon, Ternate, Naic, Imus, General Trias, Kawit, Bacoor and Cavite City.

The Cavite event is part of Touch Mobile's aggressive network marketing rollout program, where the brand stages its popular celebrity events to celebrate its proven nationwide coverage in the regional areas.

AGA Muhlach and Charlene Gonzales with Touch Mobile's VP Ana de Villa-Singson, and associates Veca Villafuerte, Jojo Vega and Blue Avelino.

PGI BAGS ANVIL AWARD

Philippine Geothermal Inc. (PGI) recently won an Anvil Award for its calendar project entitled, 'The Geothermal Story', which the company has used as a policy advocacy tool to promote environmental awareness and the role of renewable energy in the country's quest for sustainable development. Photo shows Quintin Pastrana (center), PGI senior associate for commercial affairs, holding the much coveted award dubbed as the 'Oscar of Public Relations', with the board of judges of the Public Relations Society of the Philippines (PRSP), from left, Winston Marbella, president PRSP; Michael D. Marasigan of Business World Online Inc. and Robina Gokongwei-Pe of Robinsons Supermarket, members of the board of jurors, and Victoria Medina, chair of the 38th Anvil Award and internal vice president of PRSP at his back. The Anvil recognizes outstanding corporate social responsibility and public relations program, and now on its 38th year.

UP DILIMAN TENNIS CLUB DONATES TO UP VARSITY TENNIS TEAM

The UP Diliman Tennis Club recently made a courtesy call on the UP Diliman chancellor and donated P30,000 for the UP varsity tennis team. Photo shows retired Sandigan Justice Narciso S. Nario, president, UPTDC, handing the check to chancellor Emerlinda R. Roman. Others in the picture are Dr. Ed Listanco, UPDTC treasurer, George P. Gil UPDTC chair, tournaments committee, Roman H.S. Santos Jr. club adviser and former president, dean Hilda Uy of the UP College of Human Kinetics, Dr. Gil G. Gotlangco Jr. III, vice-chancellor for community affairs, and professor Honesto Nuqui, chancellor's representative to the UPDTC board. The UP Diliman Tennis Club is a member of the UP Diliman Community that takes care and manages the UP tennis facilities.

Carat Philippines inaugurates new offices

CARAT Asia Pacific Region chief operating officer Kim Walker and newly appointed Carat Philippines president Jocelyn Domingo welcomed clients and other guests recently at the blessing of Carat's new offices at the Liberty Center in Salcedo Village, Makati City.

The move to a bigger office signals the start of what the new leadership in the agency calls "taking the agency to the next level." Kim Walker's words ring particularly significant in light of Carat Philippines' unprecedented growth in the past year, where it more than doubled its billings in 2001. Recent new account acquisitions include Adidas, Einsco (Freego Jeans), Pharmawealth and Napoleon Brandy.

The party attracted local industry personalities like Manuel "Meckoy" Quiogue, president of GMA Marketing, MTV Philippines president Francis Lumen, who came with his team - Rod Nepomuceno and Bong Paderna; Atlas Publishing general manager Deo Alvarez and Asian Spirit Airlines chair Noel Onate. Luis Nunez of Far East Media Consultants came with his son Luigi; Gerry Zorilla, Danny Gozo and Ammo's Paul Ligones were seen huddling with Philippine Daily Inquirer's Pepito Olarte, Philippine Star's Mike Maneze and Manila Bulletin's Angie Corro. McDonald's Jojo Samson was with Gadgets publisher BJ Bajar, KBP's Danny Adapon, BusinessWorld's Danny Ocampo, ABS-CBN Publishing's Margie Defensor, WRock's Lulu Hodreal, and Animo Magazine's Albert de los Santos.

Carat is the first media independent to operate in the country and has also enjoyed continued growth from its existing accounts, notably Perfetti Van Melle (Mentos and Alpenliebe), the Dutch electronics conglomerate Philips, Singaporean bakery giant Gardenia, and local market leaders Yakult and Caha de Oro. It also handles the local media requirements for other regional accounts such as Palm Pilot, Epson, Seagate and Iomega out of the Singapore office.

FROM left: Myrna Lazaro, Kim Walker (COO, Carat Asia Pacific), Jocelyn Domingo and Resti Reyes.

ASU COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER

Dr. Eulogio 'Amang' R. Magsaysay delivers his commencement speech before the faculty, parents and graduates of Aklan State University (ASU) - Ibajay campus. Dr. Amang Magsaysay spearheads the advocacy of AVE for the upliftment of quality education through the full implementation of the constitutional provision, which enjoins the state to assign the highest budgetary priority to education. This was the main theme of his commencement address.

BANDERA PHOTO EXHIBIT TOUR

Mayor Federico Poblete of Kawit, Cavite looks on at the photographs on display at the Bandera ng Ating Bayan Photo Exhibit at the Aguinaldo Shrine. The next leg of the tour will be in Fort Santiago, Intramuros, Manila. For more information about venues and dates, please call Inquirer Publications at 890-8755.

THE DOVE SENSORIUM

The said event was graced by none other than Ms Miriam Quiambao. Have a relaxing massage for every P150 purchase of any of the following Dove products: Dove cream bar, body wash, facial foam, and deodorant at the Dove Senroium in SM Megamall. Try dove for 7 days and see for yourself.

Bits Clips

Kaufman on service excellence

WORLD-renowned customer service innovator Ron Kaufman will speak on customer partnerships and quality service in a seminar titled "Secrets of Superior Service" April 24 at the ExportBank Plaza in Makati City. The seminar will offer a unique approach to service management that exceeds clients' expectations in every respect. With the market becoming intensely competitive, successful businesses must identify and develop competitive advantage to maintain customer loyalty and extend patronage. By building trust and rapport, exploring new possibilities for service and product delivery with customers, and creating entirely new service standards, companies and their customers can achieve increased satisfaction and meaningful benefits. The seminar is presented by strategic marketing firm TeamAsia. Call 876-5200 or e-mail mupaco@teamasia.com.

CGS art lessons

RESIDENTS of distant Fairview don't have to go all the way to downtown metropolis to get a taste of art lessons this summer. The Covenant of Grace School (CGS) and YKL Films bring the annual summer art workshop to the heart of Fairview-SM City-from April 24 to May 27. The workshop's art instructor is professor Jose "Nonoy" Duran, member of the Wednesday Group of the Ad Infinitum Gallery in San Juan, who has mounted several solo and group shows. The CGS, located at 6 Pearl Street, Fairview Park, Quezon City, is an educational institution run by the Fairview Christian Fellowship Church. Sessions will be held every Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 10 a.m. to 12 noon for children 5 to 8 years old, and Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 12 noon for enrollees 9 and above. For inquiries, call 936-2578 or 935-0424.

Art workshops

THIS summer, Faber-Castell announces the hosting of the "Workshop on Animation and Imagination" for children in various branches of SM Supermalls. Members of the Faber-Castell Little Masters Club and interested students, from private and public schools aged 6 to 12 may join the 3-day workshops on Filipino Animation, Japanese Animation and American Cartoons to be held in selected SM Supermalls beginning April 24. The schedule of workshops are: April 24 to 26 at the SM North Edsa, May 1 to 3 at SM Manila, May 8 to 10 at the SM Mega Atrium, May 15 to 17 at the SM Southmall, May 22 to 24 at the SM Fairview Activity Center, May 27 at SM Fairview Storyland, and May 29 to 31 at SM Pampanga. For more information, call the Faber-Castell office at 361-7391/92.

WITCH DOUBLE BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

One awesome party happened for two cool buds last March 22 at the Glorietta 2 Activity Center - the double birthday bash of Irma and Taranee, who are part of W.I.T.C.H., a group of five extraordinary girls destined to protect the universe from evil forces. Their adventures are chronicled monthly in W.I.T.C.H., the newest fantasy comic book-magazine from Disney. W.I.T.C.H. threw a bash for all the friends of Irma and Taranee. Hundreds of W.I.T.C.H. fans attended the fun-filled afternoon of yummy goodies, exciting games and cool prizes - all in celebration of friendship. Irma and Taranee's double birthday bash was made possible by W.I.T.C.H., Heartstrings and Party Zoo. Photo shows editor-in-chief Mimi Tiu signing copies of W.I.T.C.H.

WEDDING WORKS

'Wedding Works', a new weekly TV show, which airs on ABC 5, 10:30 to 11 p.m. starts on April 29. The program is a concept of wedding coordinator Bangs Zaldivar, who is also the host. Zaldivar (right) is shown interviewing Mrs Baby Hizon, the woman behind the time tested, quality guaranteed service of Hizon's Catering.

ProductFILES

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Opec mulls production cut, fears price crash

LONDON—By boosting production ahead of the war in Iraq, Opec succeeded in allaying concerns about a possible oil shortage once the shooting began. Yet instead of celebrating its achievement, the producers' cartel fears the world is now awash in crude and at risk of a ruinous price crash.

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries has called an emergency meeting for Thursday to assess postwar conditions in the oil market, with a view to slashing output to bolster sagging prices. Opec President Abdullah bin Hamad Al Attiyah has said he believes the world is oversupplied by two million barrels a day at a time when seasonal demand normally slips to its lowest level of the year.

However, energy analysts warn that crude inventories in major importing countries are still alarmingly low.

They argue that Opec must be careful not to curb production so much that refiners face low stocks of oil as they head into summer, the peak season for gasoline consumption.

"This whole idea that there is a tidal wave of overproduction that's going to sink prices is just wrong," said Adam Sieminski, an oil price strategist at Deutsche Bank in London.

"Inventories are extremely low, and Iraq is not producing, so there is no overproduction," he said.

Opec has timed its meeting in Vienna, Austria, to assess market conditions in the immediate aftermath of the war.

This won't be easy, and some analysts argue that such a meeting is premature.

No one knows when Iraq, historically a large producer, will be able to resume its crude shipments.

Nigeria and Venezuela, meanwhile, are still clawing their way back to production levels they enjoyed before social unrest and a national strike, respectively, dented their output.

Yet Opec, which pumps about one-third of the world's oil, is eager to show that it is in control of—or at least closely monitoring—a tempestuous market.

Opec's members agreed in January to a production target of 24.5 million barrels a day.

They soon were busting their quotas, to profit from the high prices preceding the war as much as to reassure markets that supplies would be plentiful in spite of any hostilities.

Opec earned plaudits from the United States and other importers for its proactive, and unofficial, production increase.

By some estimates, Opec's 10 members excluding Iraq were pumping an average of 26.2 million barrels a day last month—7 percent above their quotas.

But oil prices tumbled as the conflict unfolded. By the time the fighting was over, future contracts of US light, sweet crude had fallen by more than one-third, from a high for the year of $39.99 a barrel reached on Feb. 27.

Opec worries that prices may have farther to fall.

"I do not think there is any necessity for Opec to carry on with its excess production. We should consider a cutback in production to balance supply and demand, especially in the second quarter," Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zangeneh said Thursday in Tehran.

Many analysts accept that a production cut may be a foregone conclusion.

Kevin Norrish, head of commodities research at Barclays Capital in London, said Opec would need to rein in output by 1 million to 1.5 million barrels a day to keep prices from sliding below $22 a barrel—the bottom end of the group's targeted price range.

Leo Drollas, chief economist of the London-based Center for Global Energy Studies, suggested that a much smaller cut of 650,000 barrels a day would suffice to stabilize prices.

However, crude inventories are unusually low for this time of year, and a deep cut by Opec would make it harder for importers to build them to comfortable levels. *AP*

A JETLINER of Star Air taxis sits on the tarmac as another of Batavia Air takes off, at Sukarno-Hatta International airport in Jakarta, Indonesia. Just as many airlines worldwide are cutting back, coping with empty seats and mounting losses, Indonesia is experiencing an unprecedented boom with packed planes and numerous new domestic carriers vying for a place in the sky. By the end of 2002, there were 22 airlines in the country, up from five in 1998 when the Asian financial crisis devastated Indonesia's economy. AP

Post-Saddam Iraq hopes to attract big investments

BAGHDAD—Iraqis hope to entice foreign companies, from engineering firms to fast-food outlets, back into the shattered country to meet a desperate need for investment capital and job opportunities.

"Iraq is a hungry land, it needs everything," said Yusif Sirop Agopian, owner of the luxury al-Finjan restaurant that provided catering for the UN agencies until they left Baghdad days before the US-led war.

The main foreign players in Iraq will be US companies benefiting from a special government budget to rebuild Iraq.

And US oil companies are now expected to claim a role commensurate with their country's contribution to the war and opposition groups have said previous contracts with Russian and French firms should be renegotiated.

Foreign companies will "inject cash, provide jobs and the benefits will trickle down through large segments of the economy," said Agopian.

"See my restaurant—30 families lived directly from it; indirectly it provided work for butcher shops, bakeries and so on.

"Foreign firms will do the same, on a much, much larger scale." Iraqis "need to learn from the foreign companies' modern management, how to reward hard work and initiative."

That would be a break from the autocratic, centralized style of the old regime.

Agopian said a quick kickstart of the economy was the key to avoiding the internal political problems looming because of the power vacuum left by the old regime.

"It is the duty of the Americans, they are in charge now. If they don't, if people will be left on the streets with nothing to do, theft and chaos will continue and, perhaps, internal conflict and the rise of the religious extremists." For now, it is the Palestine and nearby Sheraton hotels, hosting hundreds of foreign journalists, that have become the magnet of thousands of people begging for jobs, paid in hard currency. *AFP*

China economy to slow down as SARS hits travel, shops

BEIJING—Vacation plans are scrapped, shopping malls are nearly deserted and restaurant staff wait nervously to serve diners who never show up.

China's admission that the SARS virus is far more widespread than previously acknowledged is taking the shine off an economy that has been the envy of the region, analysts said on Monday.

Many economists say it is too early to give specific estimates of the economic toll, but the impact of SARS on daily activity in Beijing is evident.

"Normally the road to the market is so jammed with cars you can't even get through," said Chen Li, a Beijing musician who lives near a major antique and furniture market.

Sparkling upscale shopping malls with their marble tiles have been turned into virtual echo chambers as customers, fearful of contracting the potentially deadly virus, opt to delay purchases.

China seems in little danger of missing its official growth target of seven percent for the full year, but the outbreak all but ensures the second quarter won't match the stunning 9.9 percent growth during the year to the first quarter.

Huang said he had lowered his forecast for the rise in full-year gross domestic product to 7.3 percent from 7.6 percent.

That could come down further if China fails to contain SARS, leading to factory closures or a reduction in foreign investment, which has been a key economic driver, Huang said.

"There are other implications we will assess later on, like the impact on the supply of manufactured goods or whether they will start to close down factories," Huang said. *Reuters*

AOL results could take back seat to probe

NEW YORK—AOL Time Warner Inc.'s first quarter results will likely take a back seat later this week to any details executives offer on the major issues that have battered the company's stock.

Wall Street wants to know the status of the federal probes into the America Online division, the timing of the cable spin-off and progress on asset sales to reduce the company's $29 billion total debt.

But few analysts are counting on enough guidance to clear the air, which has become heavier in the last month with a fresh round of shareholder lawsuits and disclosures that the Securities Exchange Commission investigation has been reviewing its accounting of $400 million in revenue from a deal with Bertelsmann AG .

"It will be interesting what they say about other contracts besides Bertelsmann—if they divulge other contracts that are in dispute," said Mark May, an analyst with Kaufman Bros., who expects the executives to be mostly tight-lipped.

There are hopes that the company will also discuss whether results need to be restated again at America Online because of the SEC investigation, which started last summer and has already resulted in the company restating $190 million over a two-year period.

Even an update on where the SEC and Department of Justice investigations stand would be welcome.

"People are going to be looking for information, if they can get it, on the SEC and DOJ probes and whether they are coming to a close," said Jeff Logsdon, analyst at Gerard Klauer Mattison.

The Justice Department has been investigating AOL and its accounting for revenue from some ad and commerce deals. *Reuters*

Schering-Plough names new CEO

NEW YORK—Schering-Plough Corp. on Sunday named Fred Hassan, the former top official at Pharmacia Corp., its new chief executive in an effort to turn around the struggling drugmaker.

Hassan, who transformed Pharmacia from a disorganized Swedish-American company into a fast-growing US drugmaker, took the helm of Schering-Plough immediately.

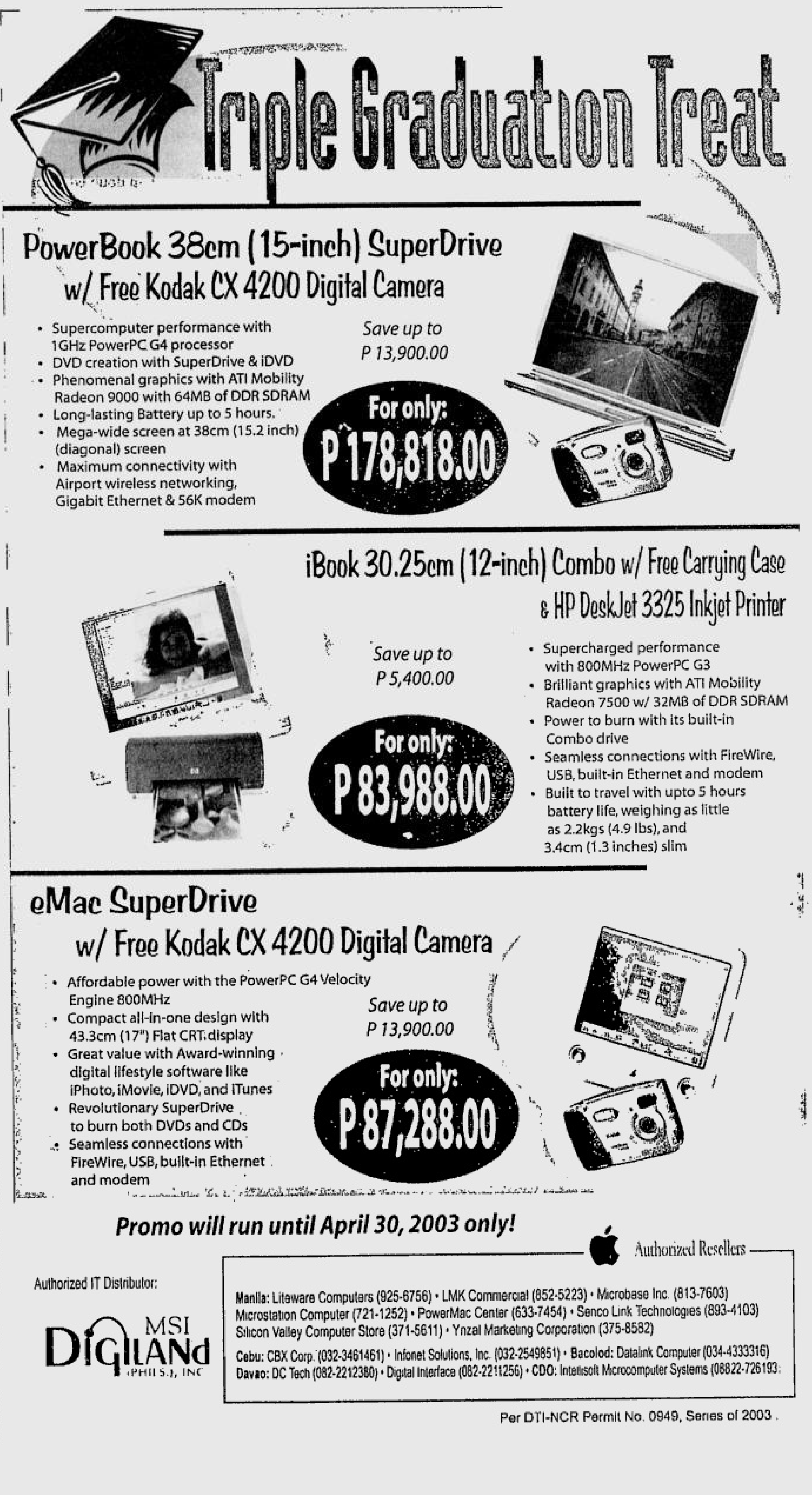
The company, known for its allergy drug Claritin and treatments for hepatitis C, said it intends to elect Hassan chairman of the board immediately after the annual shareholder meeting on Tuesday.

"Schering-Plough has got to change. We need a new urgency and new way of thinking and a new set of capabilities," Hassan told Reuters on Sunday after taking charge of the Kenilworth, New Jersey-based company.

Hassan said it will take him at least a year to visibly improve the company's roster of drugs and thereby buttress earnings growth, but that patient investors will likely be rewarded.

Schering-Plough's outgoing chief executive, Richard Kogan, late last year said he would retire amid falling profits, manufacturing problems and personal controversy.

Analysts hope Hassan—who was widely expected to get the job—can breathe new life into Schering-Plough. *Reuters*



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PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of late SIMPLICIA L. VILLARANTE has been extrajudicially settled by her heirs as per Doc.#209 Page#42 Book#6 Series of 2003 before Notary Public Al Harith D. Sali of Quezon City. PDI-April 22,29 & May 6, 2003

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late BENJAMIN C. DAVID was the subject of self-adjudication by his sole heir MARTINA I. DAVID as per Document No. 96, Page 21, Book I, Series of 2003 executed before Notary Public Atty. Reginaldo L. Hernandez (PDI-April 15, 22 & 29, 2003)

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PERSONAL

PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT
Holy Spirit thou who make me see everything and show me the way to reach my ideal. You who give me the divine gift to forgive and forget the wrong that is done to me and who are in all instances of my life with me. I, in this short dialogue, want to thank You for everything and confirm once more that I never want to be separated from You, no matter how great the material desires may be. I want to be with You and my loved ones in Your Perpetual Glory. Amen.

ATTN!!! Students, Reviewers, Affiliates, Bed Spacers & transient Boarders - Fully furnished LADIES DORMITORY now open to serve you at the back of UST, NEAR UNIVERSITY BELT, FEU, UE, SAN BEDA, at 1311 Geliños St., Sampaloc, Manila.
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The Overseas Filipinos Worldwide (OFW) Conference & Trade Exhibit

Theme: 'Overseas Filipinos Worldwide: The New Economic and Political Force'
May 23-25, 2003
Hall 3, SM Megatrade, Mandaluyong City, Philippines

HIGHLIGHT OF ACTIVITIES
- 3-day conference for Overseas Filipinos Worldwide
- 3-day trade exhibit showcasing business opportunities and investments for overseas Filipinos and their families
- Business matching and presentations of exhibiting companies
- Socials and fellowship night of overseas Filipinos
- City tours for overseas Filipinos

Reserve your exhibit booth spaces and register NOW!

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

DAY 1, May 23, 2003 --- Focused on OFW Contribution to Philippine Society
10:00am - 5:00pm
- Registration
- Welcome Remarks
- Keynote Address
- **Topic 1:** The Overseas Filipinos in Nation Building --- Impact on Philippine Economy
- **Topic 2:** The Overseas Filipinos in Nation Building --- Impact on Society, Culture, Politics and Family
- **Topic 3:** What the Overseas Filipinos and the Government should and can do to enhance the former's contribution to the Philippine economy
- Position Paper Presentations of Conference Delegates (1 for each country represented)
- Conference Resolutions
- Cocktails/Socials for Overseas Filipinos

DAY 2, May 24, 2003 — Focused on Business & Economics
10:00am- 5:00pm
- Registration
- Program for Overseas Filipinos by DOLE
- Business Opportunities for Overseas Filipinos/ SMEs by DTI
- Technology Assistance to Overseas Filipinos/ SMEs by TLRC
- Sources of Funds for Overseas/SMEs by Landbank of the Philippines, Development Bank of the Philippines, Small Business Guarantee Fund Corp., OWWA
- Entrepreneurship Seminar for Overseas Filipinos
- Business Presentations of Trade Exhibitors (Franchising, Retail Trade, Service Industries, Insurance/Pre-need Plan, Real Estate, Food Processing, Handicrafts, IT Education & Training, Agro-industrial)
- Cocktails/Socials for Overseas Filipinos

DAY 3, May 25, 2003 — Focused on Government Programs for Overseas Filipinos
10:00am- 5:00pm
- Registration
- OFW Reintegration Program by DOLE
- The Role of OWWA in the Economic Development of OFWs
- The Role of POEA in the Economic Development of OFWs
- The Role of DFA in the Economic Development of OFs
- Parallel Sessions
  - How to Start a Business
  - Marketing Your Business / Product
  - Project / Business Financing
  - Do's and Dont's of Investments
  - Crisis Management for SMEs
  - Simple Budgeting & Accounting
- Special Presentation of the 2004 Presidentiables (Topic/ Question: If you are to become the President, what will be your program for overseas Filipinos?)
- Cocktails/ Socials for Overseas Filipinos

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"Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28

In Loving Memory on the First Death Anniversary of our dearly beloved Daddy

BGEN. FRANKLIN JOSEPH V. SAMONTE, AFP (Ret.)

Who passed away on April 22, 2002

His bereaved wife Dr. **CHARLENE MORALES SAMONTE**; loving children **FREDELIO, MARY CHARMEL, ROSEMARY**, brothers, sisters, in-laws, other relatives, friends and PMA class '57, Araullo H.S. '53 request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

Holy mass will be offered today April 22, 2003
at the Libingan ng mga Bayani, Bayani Road,
Fort Bonifacio, Makati City at 4:00 PM.

HOLY GARDENS MEMORIAL PARK

3F Unishoppe Complex, Quezon Avenue, Angono, Rizal
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Helping in the Grief of Many People

INTERMENT NOTICE

Name	Date of Interment	Time	Place of Interment	Place of Wake
ARRIJL C. LLAGAS	April 22	1:00 PM	Holy Gardens Memorial Park Angono, Rizal	Holy Gardens Memorial Park Chapel A Angono, Rizal
BEATRICE Y. VENTURA	April 22	1:00 PM	Holy Gardens Memorial Park Taytay, Rizal	#15 Riyal St. Meralco Village Taytay, Rizal
ADALYN E. PEÑAVERDE	April 23	9:30 AM	Holy Gardens Memorial Park Taytay, Rizal	Rd. I, Blk 7 Lot 2 Arveemar Subd., Angono, Rizal
PELAGIO A. GONZALES, Jr.	April 22	2:00 PM	Holy Gardens Valley Memorial Park Antipolo City	Chapel B-Marian Memorial Chapels Marcos Hi-way. Antipolo City

www.holygardens.com
E-mail address: sales@holygardens.com

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DR. ALFREDO T. RAMIREZ

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FOUNDING PRESIDENT, PHILIPPINE SOCIETY OF BURN INJURIES
FOUNDER, 1ST BURN UNIT IN THE PHILIPPINES

His cremains will be brought to the Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish Church, Mahinhin St., U.P. Village, Quezon City for a 3PM Mass on April 23, 2003, Wednesday.

The PHI KAPPA MU FRATERNITY OMEGA rites shall be held immediately after the mass.

The entire PHI KAPPA MU mourns the death of our loyal and beloved brod ATR.

A web page is dedicated to Dr. Ramirez at www.phikappamu.com

In Loving Memory of

"ATR"

Alfredo T. Ramirez, MD, FPCS, FACS

Founding Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Philippine Society for the Surgery of Trauma (PSST)

beloved of Bella and son Claro Alfredo
who joined our Creator on April 13, 2003

His cremated remains will be brought to the Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish Church, Mahinhin St., U.P. Village, Quezon City for a 3 p.m. Mass on April 23, 2003, Wednesday. He will be laid to rest at a place where the pigeons he loved fly free...the Columbary of Sto. Niño de Cebu, San Agustin Seminary Campus, Fisheries St., Visayas Avenue, Quezon City.

We design **OBITUARIES** for free.

"I am the Resurrection and the Life.. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die."

- John 11:25-26a

We thank God for the Life
of our dearest Mamang, Lola, and Great Grandma

Felisa Lagon Lomeli vda. de Magsanoc y Corpuz

who peacefully joined her Creator
on Easter Sunday, April 20, 2003

She will always be remembered...

... as a loving mother to ***Miriam & Pope Covar, Mel & Mila Magsanoc, Ester & Cesar Sendaydiego*** *and* ***Bong/Bots & Vicky Corpuz***

... as the charming ***Lola*** *of* ***Verna & Roy Buensuceso, Cheryl & Bruce Le Desma, Melodie & Roel Remorca, Calvin & Shari Sendaydiego, Mildred & Rob Tonogbanua, Melanie Covar, Jennifer Corpuz, Margaret Magsanoc, Carlo & Karla Corpuz, Sonny Corpuz*** *and* ***Chowie Corpuz***

... and as a doting Great Grandma to ***Misha, Haraya, Melyssa, Zachary, Carolyn, Marc Andrew, Kacheena, Maegan*** *and* ***Nathan.***

Her remains lie in state at the Nacional Funeral Homes, Araneta Avenue, Q.C. and will be transferred to the UP Church of the Risen Lord (CRL) in the afternoon of Wednesday, April 23, 2003.

She will be laid to rest on Thursday, April 24, 2003 at Himlayang Pilipino, Tandang Sora, Q.C. after the necrological service at UP CRL at 9:30 a.m.

MISS ESPERANZA MEER HERNANDEZ

of Sto. Tomas, Batangas

Born April 5, 1914, died in the Grace of our Lord, April 20, 2003
Foundress and Retired Principal of Sto. Tomas Academy

Her sisters **Consoling H. Songcuya & Nellie M. Hernandez**; brothers-in-law **Napoleon C. Castillo & Cirilo A. Songcuya**; nieces & nephews **Daisy H. Castillo, Lory & Dennis Cerdeña, Dawn H. Songcuya, Kelly H. Songcuya, Cecille & Larry Baney, Gigi & Pat Bennett & Nonette H. Songcuya**; grandchildren **Chinit & Christine C. Cerdeña, Forrest & Nina S. Bennett**, and **Kirk H. Songcuya**; and best friends **Maria M. Torres & Dra. Chabeng Malvar-Villegas**, relatives & friends request everyone to rejoice with them at her return to our Creator.

Her remains lie in state at St. Alphonsus de Liguori Church, Chapel 1, Magallanes Village, Makati City.

Her body will be transferred to Sto. Tomas Church, Sto. Tomas, Batangas on Wednesday morning, April 23, 2003.

On Thursday, April 24, 2003, Holy Mass will be celebrated at Sto. Tomas Church at 1:00 p.m. Interment will follow at Sto. Tomas Catholic Cemetery, Sto. Tomas, Batangas.

I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.
John 14:6

JUANITA RIO BABAR

Formerly of Fort Stotsenburg, Pampanga

peacefully joined her Creator on April 19, 2003.

Her body lies in state at Loyola Memorial Chapel, Guadalupe, Makati City.

Interment will be at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina on Friday, April 25, 2003 at 2:00 p.m. after the 10:00 a.m. Mass.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."
John 3:16

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute
to your departed loved one.

INQUIRER OBITUARIES

• **DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT** • **MESSAGE OF THANKS** • **DEATH ANNIVERSARY** • **REQUIEMS** •

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate; ❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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The schedule of bidding activities are as follows:

	DATE	TIME
1. Issuance of Bid Document/Forms	- April 21 to 25, 2003	8 AM-5 PM
2. Pre-Bidding Conference	- April 25, 2003	10:00 AM
3. Bidding Proper	- May 12, 2003	2:00 PM

Bid Documents/Forms, Terms and Conditions, List of Requirements may be secured at the Office of the Assistant Regional Director, NFA-NCR U.N. Avenue, Paco, Manila upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P3,000.00 starting **April 21, 2003 to April 25, 2003** from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

Other inquiries may be addressed to the Office of the Assistant Regional Director, at the above address with telephone numbers 563-94-54 and 564-20-71 to 74 local 123.

The National Food Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any informalities or defects found therein, and to accept only such bids as are advantageous to the Agency.

(Sgd.) ATTY. BASILIDES TACO
Assistant Regional Director
Chairman, Bidding Committee

(PDI – April 15 & 22, 2003)

Republika ng Pilipinas
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT
Balasan Pambansa Complex, Constitution Hills, Quezon City
Telephone No. 931-8101 to 07

PHILIPPINES 2000

INVITATION FOR BID

IFB No. GOP/03-DSWD-002

1. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), a national government agency, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), is inviting duly accredited Health Maintenance Organizations (HMO) to apply for eligibility and to bid for the PROVISION OF HEALTHCARE SERVICES FOR DSWD EMPLOYEES NATIONWIDE THROUGH A HEALTH CARD SYSTEM.
2. For the purpose of this bid, eligible bidders shall be those who have accredited hospital and clinics in ALL regions of the country.
3. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from ***Ms. Maricris Jacinto***, BAC Secretariat Property and Supply Division, 2nd Floor, DSWD, Batasan Pambansa Complex, Constitution Hills, Quezon City with telephone nos. (632) 931-8161, (632) 931-8101 to 07 local 125, and fax no. (632) 931-1614.
4. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested bidders upon submission of a letter of intent and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Two Thousand Pesos (P2,000.00).
5. A **Pre-Bid Conference** is scheduled on **April 30, 2003 at 2:00 p.m.** to be held at the **Administrative Conference Room**, 2nd Floor, DSWD, Constitution Hills, Quezon City.
6. Sealed application for eligibility and bid proposal, together with the bid security, must be delivered to the BAC Secretariat on or before **10:00 a.m. of May 21, 2003**. Thereafter, eligibility and bid envelopes will be opened in the presence of the bidder's representative(s) who choose to attend. Opening of bids will be held at the **Administrative Conference Room**, 2nd Floor, DSWD, Constitution Hills, Quezon City. **Late bids will not be accepted**.
7. DSWD hereby reserves the right to reject any or all applications for eligibility and to bid, to waive any formality therein and/or accept the bid as maybe considered most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) **RHODA F. YAP**
Assistant Secretary and Chairperson,
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - Apr. 15 & 22, 2003)

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES LOGISTICS CENTER
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Armed Forces of the Philippines Logistics Center Bids and Awards Committee invites all interested suppliers, manufacturers and dealers of various firepower items to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid for the **SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF VARIOUS FIREPOWER ITEMS** for the AFP with an approved budget of One Hundred Ninety Five Million Nine Hundred Thirty Eight Thousand Six Hundred Pesos (Php 195,938,600.00) chargeable against the FY 2003 AFP Budget.

All interested parties are invited to attend the Pre-Bid Conference that will be held on **09 May 2003 at 10:00 o'clock a.m. at Daza Park Pavilion, AFP Logistics Center, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City.**

Tender Documents shall be available during office hours starting **21 April 2003** at Procurement Unit, AFP Logistics Center, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

A Special Power of Attorney, issued by the prospective bidder authorizing its representative to purchase the bid documents in its behalf, shall be required before issuance of the Tender Documents.

The bidders shall submit their duly accomplished eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals in three (3) separate sealed envelopes at the bid box located at the AFPLC BAC Secretariat at Daza Park Pavilion, AFP Logistics Center, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City. Submission of the envelopes shall be from 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 o'clock a.m. on **23 May 2003**, after which the opening of bids shall immediately follow.

The AFP Logistics Center reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, to waive any formality or technicality, and to award to any bidder whose proposal is deemed most advantageous to the AFP. The AFP Logistics Center likewise assumes no obligation for whatever expenses or losses that may be incurred by the bidders in the preparation of the bids, nor does it guarantee that the award shall be made.

For more information, please call the AFPLC BAC Secretariat at telephone nos. **913-1175** or **911-6001 loc. 5434**, or visit our website at www.logcen.com.

(Sgd.) **REYNALDO S RAMIREZ**
Colonel PAF (GSC)
Chairman, AFPLC BAC

(PDI - April 15 & 22, 2003)

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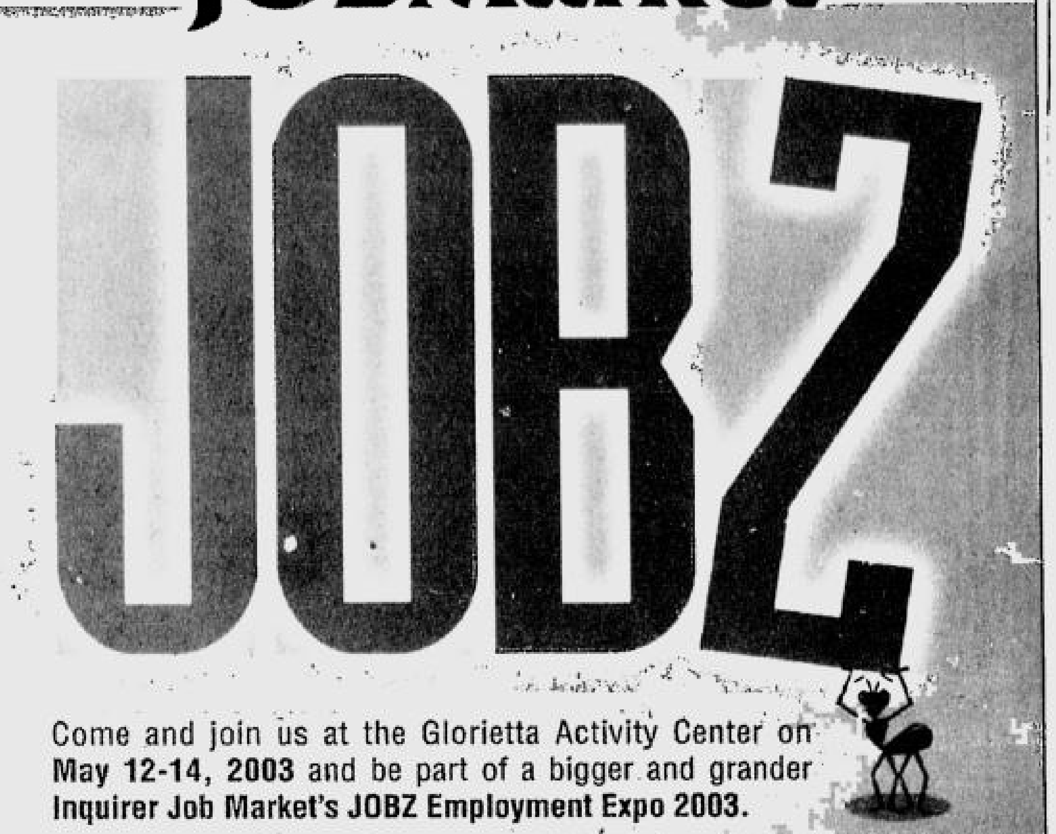

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REALESTATE

Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

Buildings that grow food rid the city of pollution

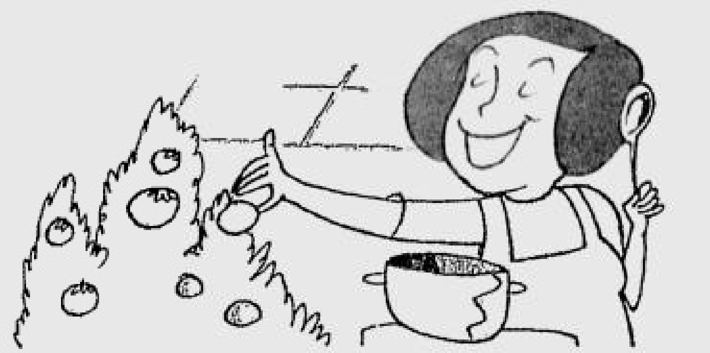

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

By Tessa R. Salazar

INTELLIGENT buildings” for the 21st century are promising concepts. To appreciate fully the potentials of an intelligent building, we must be aware of the problems that cities all over the world face.

Present-day cities and urban centers may be doing more harm than good to its dwellers and the environment. Urban populations are growing more than the cities can sustain. Industries that power the cities emit biosphere—damaging substances.

Surrounding farmlands aren't any help. According to experts, expanding farmlands produce dust, which rise up to the atmosphere forming greenhouse canopies, trapping heat, and when the dust settle in rivers, lakes and oceans, sediment beds are raised, reducing their holding capacity.

The trapped heat, meanwhile, cause vapor pressure fluctuations resulting in high-velocity winds and electrical storms, destroying trees and overflowing rivers.

US-based architect Lorenz Pe Benito, who designed several competition-winning buildings, including the Florida Power and Light Headquarters, Exxon Chemical Headquarters, and the University of Petroleum and Chemicals in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, proposes a remedy to this dilemma:

“A city in which buildings of various occupancies are integrated and support a food-growing mechanical system on their exterior structures.”

He described buildings of this kind shall use light transmittable and ventilated materials for roofs, walls and floors for photosynthesis and respiration across occupancy spaces.

Pe Benito explained the concept in a seminar for Filipino architects at the World Building Exposition event at the World Trade Center Metro Manila recently.

He specified a prototype project in a brownfield location: “a hotel that is a transient office/recreation/continuing education and exposition venue for international technology symposiums that grows and processes vegetables and seafood, manufactures by-products, reclaims waste water and generates its own electricity.”

Pe Benito practiced architecture and urban design in New York and master-planned several buildings there. He is involved in design with a proposal for mobile farm classrooms and a prototype for an industrial training resort, integrating a vertical farm, a food processing factory, a rehabilitation camp, an exposition center for global resource and technology symposiums and a mentor exchange hotel for mutual adoption and stewardship between retired CEOs and junior executives.

His joint-venture project is with California-based Viggayan architects and John Allison Civil Engineer in designing Avia Lily and Homestead City.

Simulating rainforests

His proposed specifications for the exterior structure of buildings will involve five of his inventions: a hydraulic motor transmission device for generating electricity; a vertically circulating hydroponics system; a rolling belt ramp for vertical mobility of occupants, for generating electricity and for increasing respiratory exchange between occupants and plants.

Pe Benito added there would be “light transmitive and ventilative panel capable of spectral control and insulation control for roofs, floors and walls and for hydroponics fixtures and a moldcasting machine for casting tiles and panels with glass and concrete.

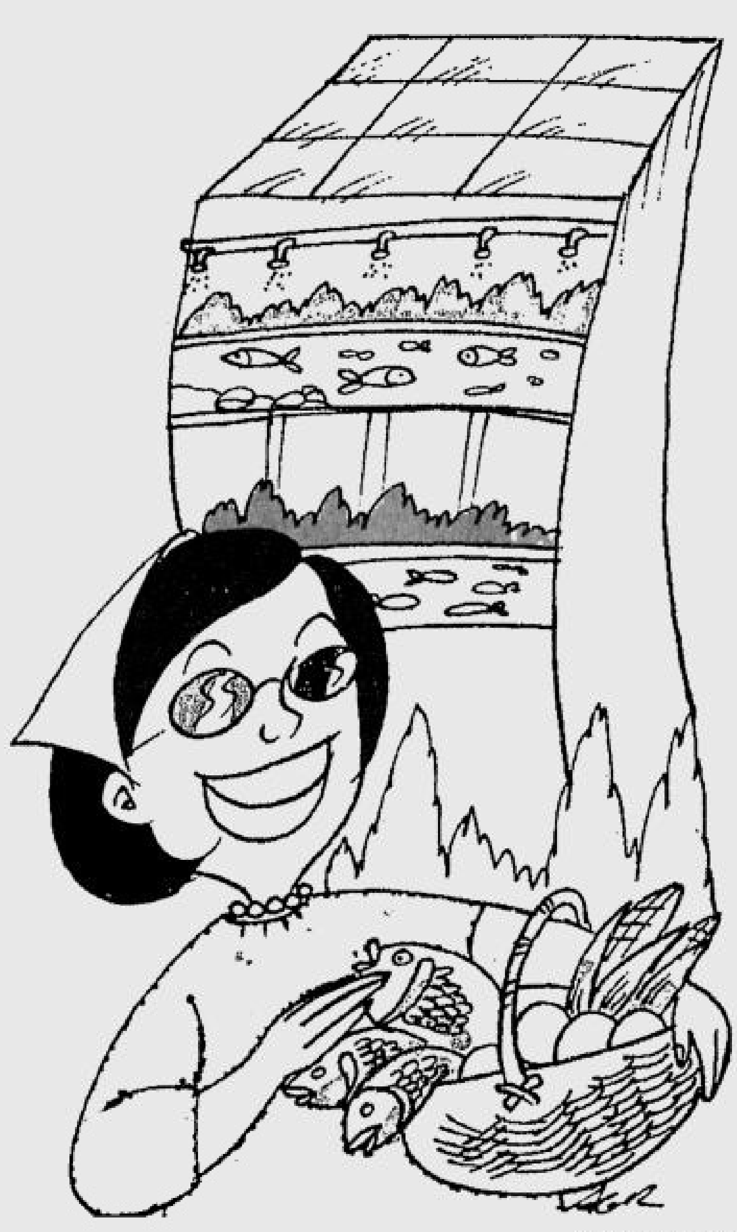

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

“The specification shall simulate a rainforest with only humans and fish as fauna and food crops as flora. For maximum solar exposure, the hydroponics system shall penetrate the interior spaces extensively such that occupants may be at arm's reach of food,” he explained.

Pe Benito told architects that except for public areas, most working and resting spaces shall be within three meters of the hydroponics. He stressed light shall pass all boundaries including floors and roofs.

“Occupants who wish to reach other levels shall take down-rolling belt ramps that are cardiovascular exercise machines that generate electrical power. The ramps shall transmit light and air and shall be flanked by vertically circulating hydroponics,” he added.

Pe Benito, who earned his master of architecture from Yale University and represented Yale University at the American Academy in Rome as first finalist of the Prix de Rome in 1983, said that specification should be applied to a hotel and convention project, which could be a venue for continuing education and symposiums in technology and industry, and a resort for cardio-pulmonary training and rehabilitation.

Vertical farms

Vertical farming in buildings, which he describes as a new form of real estate that requires a test in the urban milieu, offers food at arms reach of the building occupants. The interval (between food and working spaces), he said, should be dictated by respiration exchanges between food crops and occupants, and by conservation of energy otherwise lost to transportation.

But why should cities grow their own food inside their urban structures?

The reason is simple: self-sustenance preserves nature. “When we specify wood in our buildings or eat hamburgers from fast-food restaurants, we are as liable as the lumber and cattle entrepreneurs in Brazil for the flood in Chile, the phosphate contamination of aquifers in Peru, and the death or extinction of animals and plants of the tropical rain forest,” stressed Pe Benito.

The United States Geological Survey indicates that more than 800,000 hectares of tropical rain forest in Brazil are razed each year for the beef and hardwood trades worldwide.

Vertical planting and conveyance, he said, could supplant all the land now taken from forests by grazing. The hydroponics and daylight colored by verdure could pass through most interiors, making wood superfluous.

Cattle and other grazing animals will not be included in the integrated food system, except fish and crustaceans in order to manage waste.

Seafood may be included because it could be raised in vertically circulated trays where wastewater may be passed through the growing media of the hydroponics, and the transparent aquarium fixtures may carry light to the lower depths of the hydroponics aisles, said Pe Benito.

‘7 Dolores Place’ condominium for Pag-Ibig members, others

THE ARCHITECTURAL and engineering plans of “7 Dolores Place,” an upscale condominium project, have been completed to provide affordable and comfortable residential units in prime Metro Manila areas.

This was announced by Turalba and Associates, a leading design group in the country, and Goram Development Corp., project owner and developer.

7 Dolores Place will be located on Main Avenue, Cubao, Quezon City, some 200 meters off Edsa, a convenient distance to Santolan MRT Station, Farmers' Plaza, and Greenhills Commercial Center.

“7 Dolores Place may be just like any other upscale condominiums in Metro Manila with the usual features, amenities and prime location, except for its price and special design,” said Gorayeb, chair of the developer-owner company.

Most units are priced below P1 million. All units are specially designed with ample windows to provide natural air circulation and ventilation, facing east, south and north. There are no inner or so-called regular units, for all are special or, one may say, prime units.

Thus, Gorayeb said, “the only thing cheap about the project is the price and the terms.” One hundred fifty of the 270 units have been reserved for Pag-Ibig Fund members, with no down payment, a P5,000 condominium association membership fee, equity at a low P4,000 monthly for 24 months, amortization on the balance to start on the 25th month at a low of P8,500 monthly.

Application forms for association members who will eventually be unit owners may be obtained from Vitus P. Cruz, interim president of the 7 Dolores Place Condominium Association, at CVG Center, 36 First Ave., Cubao, Quezon City at 723-4922; fax 723-4920; e-mail at goram@mindgate.net.

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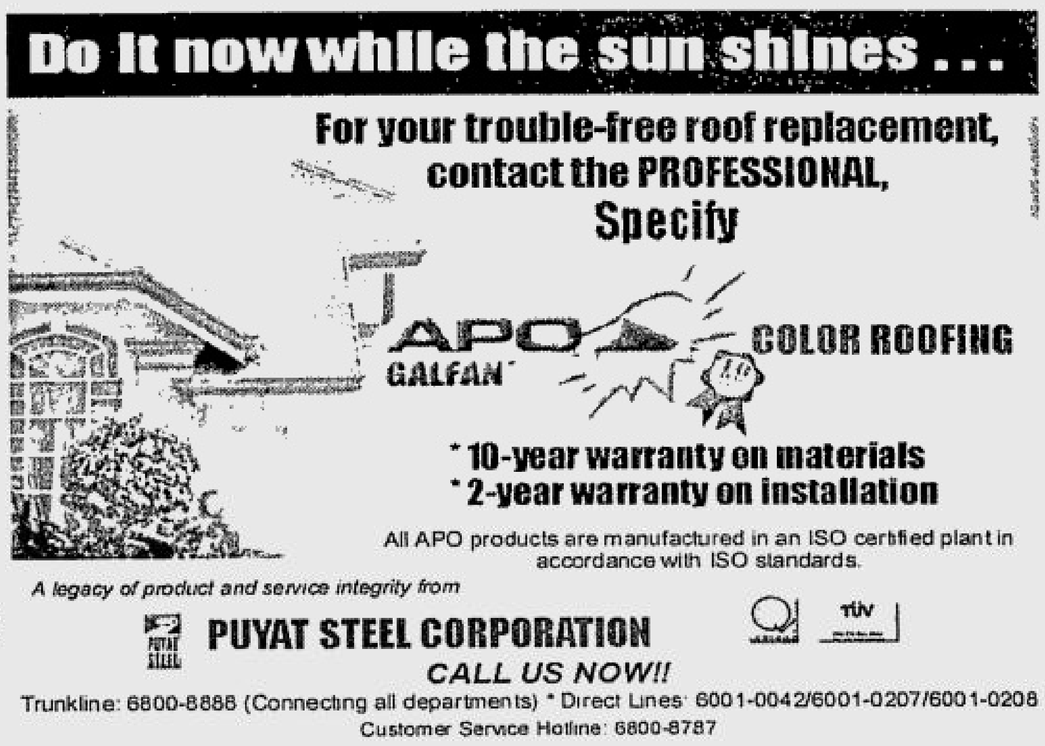

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Building healthy environment to support community's future

By Charles E. Buban

REHABILITATING damaged ecosystem will not only impact on surrounding communities. In fact, these undertakings will guarantee a community's future in this planet.

These fast-diminishing regions of our planet provide wildlife habitat and even protect the water quality of many watersheds that serve as downstream drinking water sources.

Realizing these facts, the two municipalities of Pagbilao and Padre Burgos in the province of Quezon began reforesting their coastal as well as upland regions.

With the support and initiative of one energy company operating in the area, the project has provided several communities there with new sources of livelihood while ensuring that environmental disasters like flash floods, drought, and even global warming will be averted.

Carbon sink

The project is aptly named "Carbon sink," by its main proponent, Mirant Philippines, an energy company that operates a 735 MW power plant in Pagbilao.

Carbon sink, or storage area, refers to an area where the rate of carbon absorption by living organisms exceeds the rate of carbon release, so that carbon is sequestered in organic or inorganic forms.

Carbon sinks include the terrestrial environment including upland and mangrove forests.

Many people blame global warming on carbon dioxide sent into the atmosphere from burning fossil fuels such as coal, oil and natural gas.

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

According to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, mangrove forests once covered three-fourths of the coastlines of tropical and sub-tropical countries like the Philippines.

Today, less than 50 percent remain, and of this remaining forests, over 50 percent is degraded and not in good form.

First in the country

Mirant's project in Quezon province is the largest-ever private-sector initiative to preserve and protect the country's mangrove forests.

The project is currently reforesting 150 hectares of mangrove forests and another 150 hectares of upland forest as well as developing an eco-destination in partnership with the DENR-Quezon.

The mangrove forests of Pagbilao and Padre Burgos are important parts of the region's ecosystem, which is situated along Pagbilao Bay.

As one of the most bio-diverse ecosystems in the world, it is home to some 47 different mangrove species, according to the DENR authorities.

However, it has diminished in recent years as communities in the area use the trees to make charcoal, dye leather, and build material for houses and fish pens.

Community involvement

Also included in the reforestation effort, Mirant and the DENR started a program to raise community awareness on environmental issues and the effects of degradation of mangroves.

Since then hectares of eroded coastal land have been restored and the cutting of mangroves has significantly decreased, according to Mirant's report.

With the restoration of mangrove forests assured, even fishermen in the area are sure to benefit as these coastal forests provide critical habitat for a diverse marine and terrestrial flora and fauna—key to a healthy marine ecology that fishermen need.

In addition, Mirant, with the help of the DENR, has established an eco-destination area in the midst of their experimental mangrove forests. The area includes bunkhouses, learning centers and a kilometer-long boardwalk from where the mangroves can be viewed and studied more closely.

The eco-destination project is also expected to promote tourism in the area, which will also provide communities there additional means of livelihood.

Lorenzana ventures into realty business

RIDING on the wave of its success in the food industry, the Lorenzana family recently announced plans to be more active in the real estate business via incorporation of family real estate assets.

The venture into real estate was announced by the family matriarch, Anita Lorenzana, on the occasion of the 95th anniversary of Lorenzana Food Corp. The new firm, Anasol Corp., will hold office in the bustling Libis business and commercial district in Quezon City.

The project is considered a timely move by the family, i.e., an endeavor complementary to the government's housing program. It aims to provide housing for the low-end and middle markets, the overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) in particular.

Heading the new company is Reynaldo Gregorio as the president. Gregorio worked as executive vice president of Land Bank from 1979 to 2000 and deputy administrator of SSS from 1966 to 1979.

Said Gregorio: "I am glad to accept this challenge to work with the family in their vision of providing projects that will not only help the government but the Filipino community as well. We hope to make Anasol an active player in the industry, especially in its quest to provide housing for those who need our services."

Gregorio also said the family's expansion in real estate is strategic considering the renewed interest of investors in this sector, especially the housing sector.

Family-owned properties in the southern province of Cavite, specifically Imus, Bacoor, Silang, and Anabu, will be the site of initial commercial and residential projects.

Other key officers of the new company are Jay Diaz who will manage the finance department; David Lorenzana for the operations; and Erick Veneracion for information technology. Other directors are George Lorenzana and Solomon Lorenzana Jr.

Premium kitchens at One Legazpi Park

IF the living room is the face of a home, the kitchen is arguably its soul. An outsider can get a glimpse of how the occupants within run their affairs, or even know how caring they are, through the kitchen setup. A functional and well-designed kitchen speaks volumes of the organization and orderliness of the family that uses it.

Real estate leader Ayala Land introduces Legazpi Premiere, ultra-exclusive units (excluding penthouse units) at its residential condominium One Legazpi Park at the corner of Legazpi and Rada streets in Makati City. Legazpi Premiere units are equipped with solid-surface countertops and German-made fittings, and are given even more class with superiorly crafted doors and drawer fronts. Studio and one-bedroom units will have European-style, wood grain, maple-laminate doors with aluminum strip handles. Two- and three-bedroom units will have solid, Italian-made Alder wood frame doors.

Not only is the kitchen more beautiful, but exceptionally functional as well. Food preparation can be done in one smooth flow, with everything at arm's reach.

One Legazpi Park is close to fine shops and restaurants of Ayala Center. It will rise 45 stories, and raise the benchmark of fine living along with it. The building will feature an air-conditioned grand lobby, a social hall, swimming pool, daycare center with play area, and a fully equipped gym along with other amenities and thoughtful provisions. Building management will be taken care of by Ayala Property Management Corp.

NEW CONDO BUILDING AT ROCKWFELL CENTER

Oscar M. Lopez, chair of the Lopez Group of Companies, makes a point regarding The Manansala, a new condominium building to be constructed in the Rockwell Center. The condominium will be part of a highly integrated complex with easy access to the Power Plant Mall and the Rockwell Club. Looking on are Claudio B. Altura, chair, SKI; Dr. Fiorello R. Estuar, president, First Balfour; Albert D. Altura, president and chief executive officer, SKI; and Nestor J. Padilla, president and CEO, Rockwell Land Corp.

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Moldex hosts business opportunity session

MOLDEX Realty Marketing Inc. announced this week that it is holding another one of its popular business opportunity sessions for all real estate sales professionals. This year's meeting is on April 25 at the MRMI business office, 3rd floor, Golden Bay Hotel, Roxas Boulevard corner Padre Faura in Ermita, Manila.

Editha L. Manansala, MRMI president, said the meet actually kicks off the run-up to the company's high-energy sales push this year, which will see exciting new promos and programs for both clients and real estate sales practitioners.

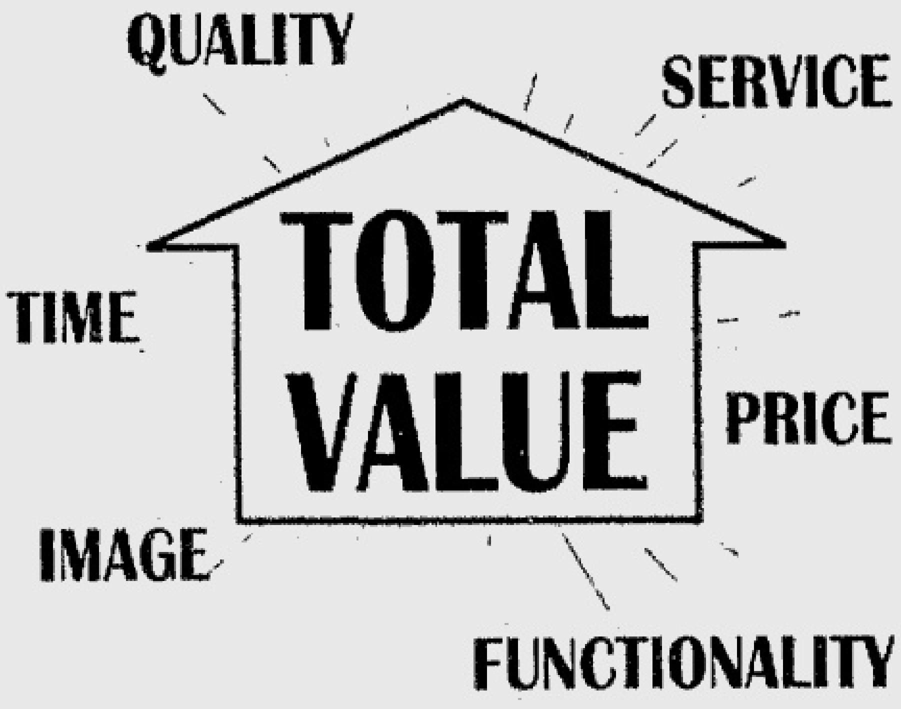
"At MRMI, people with experience in real estate sales can earn a lot of money selling property that's not just high quality but also is in high demand," said Manansala.

The MRMI president added that to sell for the MRMI means selling for one of the pillars of the real estate industry, a robust company whose strength is rooted in a strong financial backing and an institutional commitment to protecting the name, credibility and integrity of its sales force.

To join the MRMI business opportunity meeting, call 522-7777.

Buy on total value and not on price alone

By Alexis A. Acacio, Ph.D.



WE all want to get the most value for our money. So when the time comes to look for the perfect house, we tend to focus mainly on prices thinking that the lowest priced home will give us the best value. If this were true, then everyone would be wearing the cheapest clothes, driving the cheapest cars, eating at the cheapest restaurants and vacationing at the cheapest places.

It is more than just price when buying a home, a tract of land or availing of construction services. No two properties are exactly alike and when you compare properties on cost per square meter alone, then you may be falling into the "price per square meter trap."

The value equation

In buying a home, it is best to assess the things that are most important to us. Price is just a part of the total equation of value:

Total Value = Quality + Functionality + Price + Service + Time + Image

In buying a home, the criteria should be the value and not price. The important thing here is that one should know what is most valuable to him or her. For other people it is quality, for others it is price, for others it is image. Simply put, different people have different needs and priorities.

Quality

As modern marketers would say these days, the customer defines quality. Yes it is true that whatever quality level the customer wants, should be followed. In home building, a very high quality may come at a very high price. Ask yourself on the quality level that is acceptable to you. For homes, more expensive finishes are commonly associated with high quality. However, this mindset may only be partly true for there are beautiful fixtures and finishes available in the market that do not come with a high price tag.

Quality as defined by people in the manufacturing industry can be the consistent production of certain goods within the acceptable tolerance levels. Quality for a home buyer may be interpreted in a different way. It can be the construction of a specific design or simply a specific color scheme. It can be a smooth wall in a house. The point is that the home buyer or the person paying for the property will have to define the quality level. It is best that you assess your real needs.

Functionality

Every house or building layout should be functional to fit the desired use. Again, planning is the key in order to come up with a functional design.

Study the layout of your home. Will it serve the needs of your family? If you love to entertain, then the living space should be large enough to accommodate your guests. If you like to work at home, then a space for a study or home office may be required. Remember that the owner and the user will plan the house depending on the required functional spaces.

Service

The service that the provider delivers is also important. If you were to buy a vacant lot, then the service of the broker on the title transfer services becomes important to you. You would want a hassle-free documentation and title transfer process. If you were to buy a construction service, you would expect your builder to guide you during the design and construction phases of your home.

The reputation, capability, experience and track record of the builder are very important in the decision process of selecting who will build your home. You may want to look at its past and ongoing projects. How do the builder deal with you? Are the builder's people courteous enough in handling your requests? Ask their previous clients if they were satisfied with the builder.

Time of delivery

For some owners, time of delivery may be the most important aspect. For commercial investments, being able to start operations earlier will surely benefit the owner and the added cost for an early completion may be worth it.

Some owners even give a bonus for a project that is completed ahead of schedule.

Price

Comparing many builders based on price per square meter may confuse you. It is best that you look at all of the materials that are used in their proposals. Unless the design plans of your house or commercial building are done to the smallest detail, the builder in his or her estimate will have to make certain assumptions. Discuss with the builders the assumptions that they have made in coming up with the price per square meter quotation.

Look at the other extras that come with the price quotation. Does it include the fence of your house? How about the landscaping? The point here is that a price comparison may be difficult if the builders have different assumptions. The terms of payment are likewise very important.

Image

You may not admit it but image plays an important role in the purchase of your home.

Buyers tend to be attracted to neighborhoods that they can live comfortably and peacefully. They want to associate with their neighbors and would want a place in which their children can play and have friends. The image of a neighborhood reflects the lifestyle and status of its residents.

Final note

Look at the value equation and ask yourself about the things that are important to you. Buying a home or real estate can be one of the biggest purchases that you would make in your lifetime.

Make sure that you know what you want so that you will know what to look for. Again, it is not just price but it is "total value."

(Alexis A. Acacio is an associate professor of civil engineering at the University of the Philippines. For comments and advice you may reach him at aaacacio@pacific.net.ph.)

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STA. LUCIA REALTY

Premiere golf estate developer

STA. Lucia Realty and Development Inc.'s bid to develop the country as a premiere golfing destination grows stronger with every new layout and more course choices it completes yearly. Vice president Vicente Santos said the wealth of experience, expertise pool and resources the company refined over the years laid the groundwork for some of country's best world-class golf resort and country clubs.

To date, there are six golf and country clubs with a total of 165 holes in full swing in as many diverse playing fields there is. The Executive Golf Course, Royale Tagaytay Golf & Country Club, in Alfonso, Cavite, features a nine-hole garden golf in a cool weather location. Executed by world-class course design specialists—themselves some of the world's multiawarded golfers—Andy Dye, Arnold Palmer, Isao Aoki, Nick Faldo and Greg Norman are names that carry great cachet in the golfing world and to play on their courses is to approximate championship plays. Foremost of which is the Eagle Ridge Golf & Country Club in Dasmariñas, Cavite, with 65 completed holes set in a variety of themed greens. The Orchard Golf & Country Club (Dasmariñas, Cavite) with 36 holes designed by Arnold Palmer and Gary Player continues to be a favorite tour venue. It played a host site for the Johnnie Walker Classic Golf Championships, and is a weekend golfing top-drawer. The short but challenging mountain course of Alta Vista Golf & Country Club (Cebu) and Rancho Palos Verdes (Davao) are 18-hole affairs while Caliraya Springs Golf & Country Club (Cavinti, Laguna) has 9 holes already in place is ideal for weekend golfers and their families who prefer the attractions of the water. Sta. Lucia built these golf courses against a backdrop of a lake, mountain, bay, hills and forest.

Sta. Lucia's master-planning expertise extends to nongolf pursuits. Their golfing destinations are complemented with resort features and ambience—both man-made and natural—that offers something for everyone. The recreation amenities include facilities for water sports; conservation and forest borders for trail hikes and biking, on top of the established amenity line Sta. Lucia offers within the clubhouse, tee houses, residential and transient community accommodations. All are built with the highest regard for creating the total club experience.

For this year, Sta. Lucia adds on to the list to complete 10 holes at Summit Point (Lipa, Batangas), which as of this month has 7 holes already finished; and 9 holes for Lakewood City Golf (Cabanatuan) with 3 holes already grassed. At the same time, the developer is shaping the course at the Pinewoods (Baguio) with 18 holes; and Caliraya Lake Ridge (Cavinti, Laguna) with 36 holes.

Said Santos: "We know that the best plays are those on courses, which challenge skills and exceed member expectations in terms of investment value and enjoyment on the greens, and offer a broader appeal to everyone. Whether set in locales that offer a lake view, sea winds, ravines for rugged plays, rolling hills or mango tree lines, we aim to provide. New courses still taking shape means more great choices that draw in more players worldwide, making the Philippines a popular golf destination."

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   Kaya: 2 min. calls = 2 electronic raffle entries; 3 min. calls = 3 electronic raffle entries.
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See flyers for more details.

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LIFESTYLE

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

On cravings, diet and natural Viagra

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

THE MOST intriguing part about knowing the solution to health and wellness problems is knowing the right questions to ask. To our readers who thirst for knowledge, we attempt here to answer some of their oft-asked questions.

How do you make up for a high-sodium diet?

You can neutralize the effects of too much salt by flushing it out with water. Drink eight glasses of salt-free water a day to be sure.

Can birth-control pills rob the body of nutrients?

Yes. The pill can interfere with the availability of Vitamins B6, B12, folic acid and Vitamin C. So, take your multivitamin mineral supplement daily.

What can amino-acid supplements do for me?

Amino acids are the building blocks of one of our most important nutrients—protein. Every cell in your body needs and contains protein.

It is used to build and repair tissue and damaged cells, and keep the acid-alkaline blood content balanced. There are 23 commonly known amino acids. Eight of these are called essential amino acids which cannot be manufactured by the human body and must be obtained from food or supplements. The best formulas are derived from soybeans, non-fat milk, whey, egg white. They can be added to your beverage.

If you are taking supplements, it is wise to include vitamins involved in their metabolism—B6, B12 and niacin.

Tell me more about the health benefits of arginine.

Called natural Viagra, it is one of the essential amino acids responsible for the synthesis and release of the pituitary gland's growth hormone.

It can increase sperm count and enhance sexual performance in men, increase acids in immune response and healing of wounds, metabolize stored body fat and promote physical and mental alertness.

Best sources: nuts, popcorn, gelatin, chocolate, oatmeal, raisins, sunflower/sesame seeds, whole wheat bread and protein-rich foods. Caution: Don't take supplements regularly without the advice of your physician.

L-arginine must be taken on an empty stomach with juice or water. Take 2,000 mg before retiring as an immune-system booster, for muscle-toning, 2,000 mg 1 hour prior to exercise, for sex-enhancing benefits, 3,000-6,000 mg 45 minutes before any activity. (Source: "Vitamin Bible for the 21st Century" by Earl L. Mindell, R, Ph.D.)

What are the natural foods and supplements that can help lower cholesterol?

The list is very long, but here are a few items worth remembering:

Barley, cruciferous vegetables like broccoli and cauliflower, eggplant, fiber (25-30 g daily), garlic (1 capsule 3x daily), ginger (1 cup of tea without sugar 3x a day or 1 capsule 3x daily), lentils, onions, oat bran, raw carrots, red pepper, soy beans/soy food, Vitamin C and E, fish oils (500 mg daily—do not mix with blood thinning medicines), olive/canola oil, apples, grapefruit, rice, yogurt.

I am always on a diet. Should I eat pasta instead of steak?

You are better off having fish, which is high in protein and low in calories. However, carbo, as in pasta, is less fattening than steak.

If you are an active person and have an exercise regimen, you shouldn't have problems burning carbo.

What are cravings?

Cravings, which can sometimes mean allergies, are more often nature's way of letting you know that you're not getting enough of a certain vitamin or mineral. Specific hungers occur because your overall diet may be inadequate. Here are some common cravings:

Chocolate—Probably the foremost craving! Chocoholics are addicted to the caffeine and sugar.

Salt—You are after the sodium. Cravers may have a thyroid iodine deficiency or low sodium Addison's disease.

Chinese food—Often it's the MSG you are after. However, most Chinese restaurants prepare MSG-free food upon request.

Bacon—It's the fat. Bacon is loaded with fat and nitrites (now considered carcinogenic). Make sure you counteract the nitrites with Vitamins C, A, D and E. Better yet, avoid it.

Ice cream—High in calcium and sugar. Take the Nestle No-Fat, No-Sugar Ice Cream instead (available only at Mercury Drug).

ON CRAVINGS C4

> Cravings are nature's way of telling you that you're not getting enough of a certain vitamin or mineral

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One satisfied client, Janet Ley, relates her happiness with IPL: "I like it. I really like it because after only my second treatment, my freckles are gone!"

IPL Photorejuvenation Treatment helps banish freckles, dark spots, and spider veins without a trace. According to Janet, "I believe my freckles became more prominent as I got older. So whenever I went out of the house, I would use face powder to cover them up. But now I don't use anything anymore because they're all gone! And now people would tell me that I have really nice, flawless skin."

IPL is a gentle, non-invasive treatment that uses a broad spectrum of light to treat the face, neck, chest, back, hands and virtually anywhere that sun damage or blemishes show. It uses the Intense Pulsed Light technology to correct a variety of skin conditions such as skin imperfections: freckles, skin discoloration, signs of ageing, age spots, unsightly spider veins, broken capillaries, rosacea and other blemishes. Facial Care Centre's Dr. Maria Isabelita Joya says, "IPL's amazing results include: better skin tone, reduced blotchiness, pigmentations and broken blood vessels, smoother surface texture, and a more youthful-looking skin."

To restore an overall youthful look, IPL can simultaneously treat a wide variety of skin concerns safely and effectively. It erases skin damage with minor disruption on the skin's surface unlike other conventional treatments. As another satisfied client, Dr. Ariel Torres, would attest: "I'm an avid golfer so I'm very much exposed to the sun. That's how I had freckles. And I've tried every whitening product you can possibly think of: whitening cream, whitening lotion, sunblock, scrub, I even bought this thing from Hong Kong that you're supposed to drink to lighten your skin...nothing! It lightens up your skin for a while but you can't expose yourself to the sun anymore. And for avid players like me, that's totally unthinkable! So when I tried IPL, I was really impressed. Just after the first treatment, there were already visible, dramatic results! IPL is really the only treatment that worked for me."

Like Dr. Torres and Janet Ley, many satisfied clients have reported a reduction in age spots, freckles, and other skin discoloration. Most women who lead active and busy lifestyles are happy with the fact that aside from the visible improvement in their skin, they experience relatively no downtime. This means that one can actually have fairer, even-toned, glowing skin after approximately 30 minutes of treatment, and can go to work on the same day, as if nothing happened at all!

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Janet Ley, enjoying her clear, flawless skin.

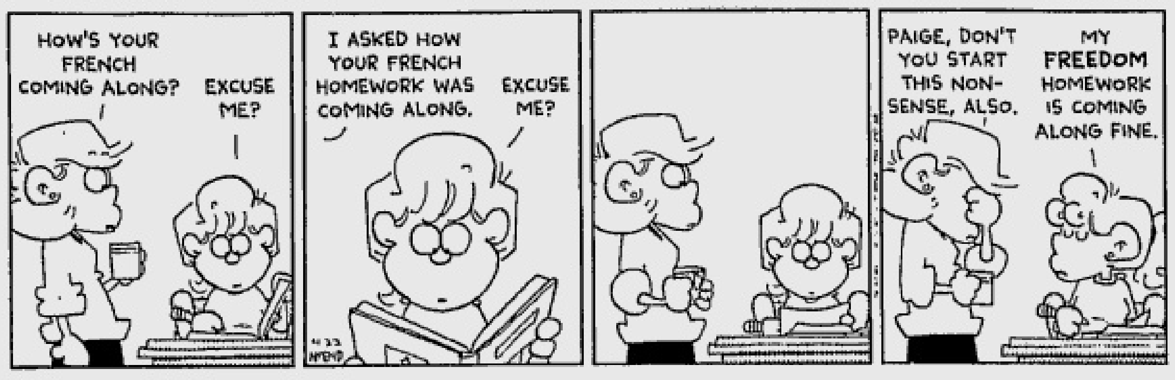
Dr. Joya performing the IPL Photorejuvenation Treatment on a client.

Another satisfied client, Dr. Ariel Torres.

Dr. Maria Isabelita Joya with the IPL machine.

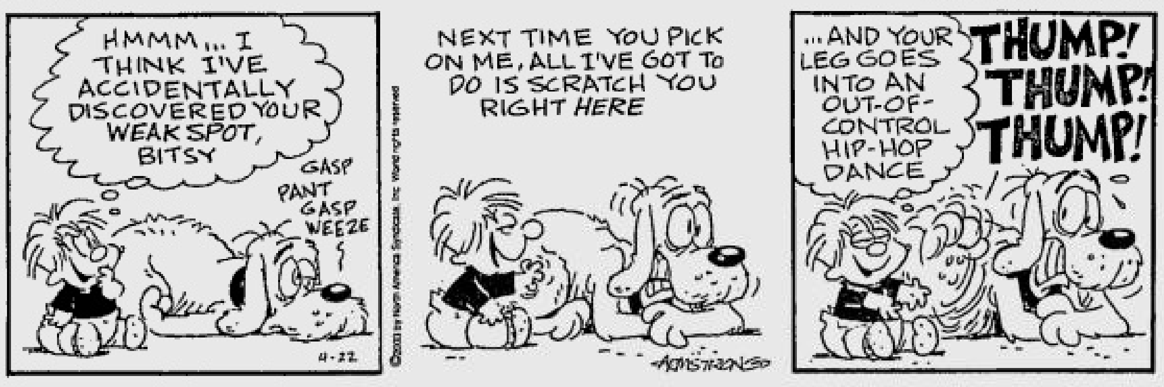
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


HOW'S YOUR FRENCH COMING ALONG?
EXCUSE ME?
I ASKED HOW YOUR FRENCH HOMEWORK WAS COMING ALONG.
EXCUSE ME?
PAIGE, DON'T YOU START THIS NONSENSE, ALSO.
MY FREEDOM HOMEWORK IS COMING ALONG FINE.
4-22 AMEND

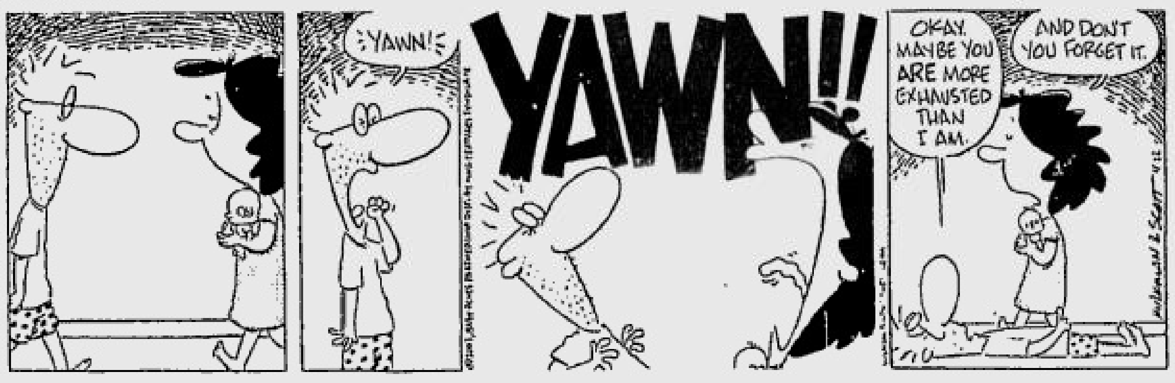
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


HMMM... I THINK I'VE ACCIDENTALLY DISCOVERED YOUR WEAK SPOT, BITSY
GASP PANT GASP WEEZE
4-22
NEXT TIME YOU PICK ON ME, ALL I'VE GOT TO DO IS SCRATCH YOU RIGHT HERE
ARMSTRONG
...AND YOUR LEG GOES INTO AN OUT-OF-CONTROL HIP-HOP DANCE
THUMP! THUMP! THUMP!

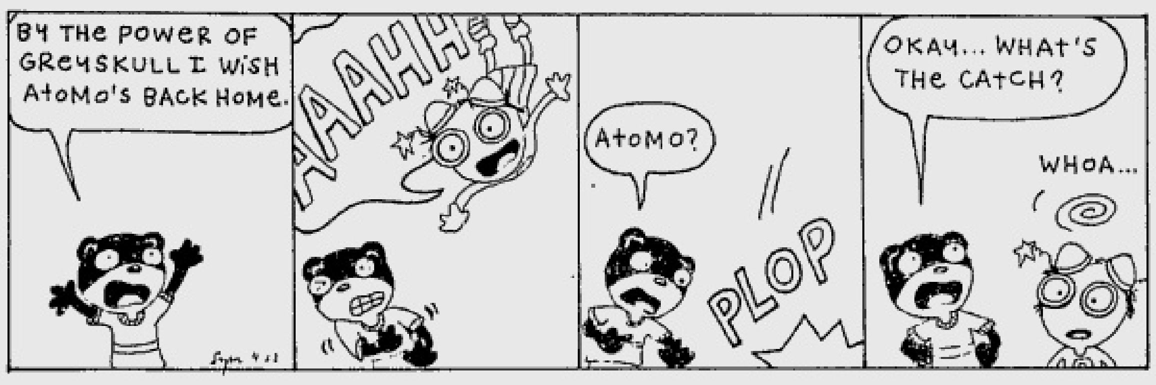
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


YAWN!
YAWN!!
OKAY. MAYBE YOU ARE MORE EXHAUSTED THAN I AM.
AND DON'T YOU FORGET IT.

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


BY THE POWER OF GREYSKULL I WISH ATOMO'S BACK HOME.
AAAHH
ATOMO?
PLOP
OKAY... WHAT'S THE CATCH?
WHOA...

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are tenacious, hardworking and focused. Because of this, you get results. You are also socially aware and friendly to others. Your security matters to you; in this, you are careful. Nevertheless, at times you are unusually impulsive. You are a shrewd observer of the human condition. Major changes await you this year.
Birthdate of: William Shakespeare, playwright; Lee Majors, actor; Shirley Temple Black, actress/diplomat.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You can have a good time with friends today, especially a female friend. Discuss your hopes and dreams for the future. Share your goals with others in order to hear what they have to say.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Authority figures like your ambition. It's easy to impress important people today. The Sun and Mercury are both in your sign. Go for it!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You have a strong desire to escape or do something different today. You don't want to stick to your normal, everyday routine. That's all right—do something out of the ordinary.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Take a few minutes today to sort out bills, credit-card debt and what you share with others. If you establish this more clearly in your mind, you will feel more in control.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): With the Moon directly opposite your sign, you have to go more than halfway in discussions with others today. Just accept this. Cooperate if you can.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Put forth a little effort to get better organized today, either at home, at work or in both places. You'll sleep better when your life is nicely organized. Do this for yourself.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Everything having to do with love affairs, romance and matters of the heart fills your thoughts today. There's something or someone you can't get off of your mind.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Chaos and tension at home can be smoothed over with a little patience and tolerance. Why provoke more conflict in your own back yard?

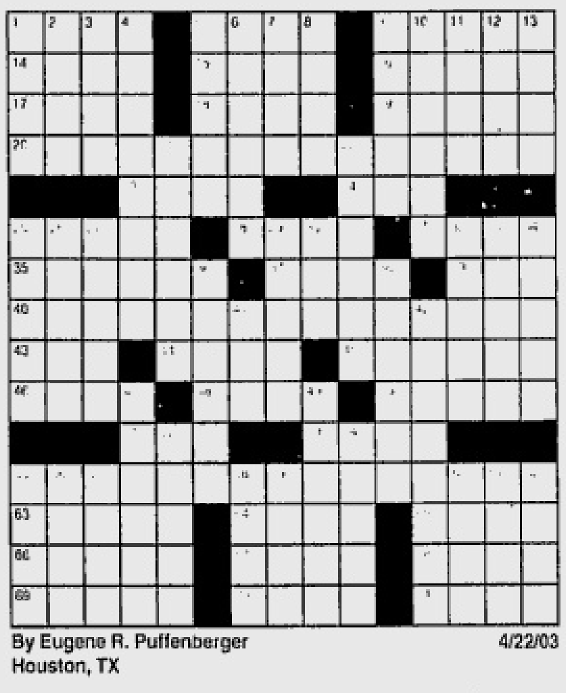
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You are unusually persuasive today. If you have to sell, teach, convince or sway, you're hot. Nobody can resist your verbal gymnastics.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Attend to banking needs and financial matters today. Money spent on children, entertainment and romance will delight you. Shop for something that pleases you tomorrow as well as today.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You see now how important home and family is to you. Get some physical exercise to alleviate your pent-up energy. Mars in your sign can make you too aggressive. You have to lighten up.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You have a few secrets right now. This doesn't mean anything devious; it simply means you're being very private about your business—which is, of course, entirely your right.

DAILY CROSSWORD

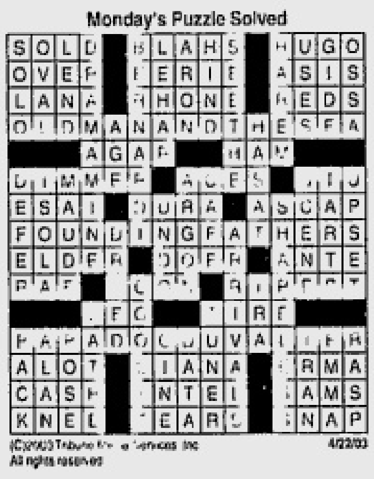


By Eugene R. Puffenberger
Houston, TX
4/22/03

ACROSS
1 Plays a role
5 Ski lift
9 Wide open
14 __ a one
15 Olympian Korbut
16 Digestive-system malady
17 Emerald Isle
18 Briny droplet
19 Challenges
20 Pole
23 Oner
24 Artfully shy
25 Garret
28 Substandard
31 Deep-orange chalcedony
35 Muse of astronomy
37 First murderer
39 Old-time Olds
40 Pole
43 Black cuckoo
44 Beige
45 Smeltery byproduct
46 WWII landing craft
48 Trumpeter Alpert
50 Snorer's peril
51 Before, to bards
53 Brooklet
55 Pole
63 Type size
64 Cast a ballot
65 Sheltered harbor
66 Con man's assistant
67 Harrow rival
68 Andy's pal
69 Stories
70 Sound unit
71 Puts in stitches

DOWN
1 Once more
2 Singer Vikki
3 The Dixie Chicks, e.g.
4 Fold in rocks
5 Complete
6 Exploded
7 Culture medium
8 Underdone
9 Sound system
10 __ Knight and the Pips
11 Erskine Caldwell best seller, "God's Little __"
12 Hammerhead part
13 Formerly, formerly
21 Trademark transparent thermoplastic
22 Theater drops
25 Relating to the ear
26 Pose starter?
27 Unstated
29 Take place
30 __ Ridge Boys
32 Alan or Adam
33 "Harlem Nights" co-star
34 Backs in anatomy
36 Robin Hood or William Tell
38 Fire-bomb substance
41 Exist
42 Copies
47 Colonize
49 French poet Andre
52 Film spools
54 Goodnight girl of song
55 Hemp fiber
56 Turkish title
57 Follow
58 French actor Montand
59 Dorothy's dog
60 Gold Rush boomtown
61 Declare frankly
62 Fewer

Monday's Puzzle Solved



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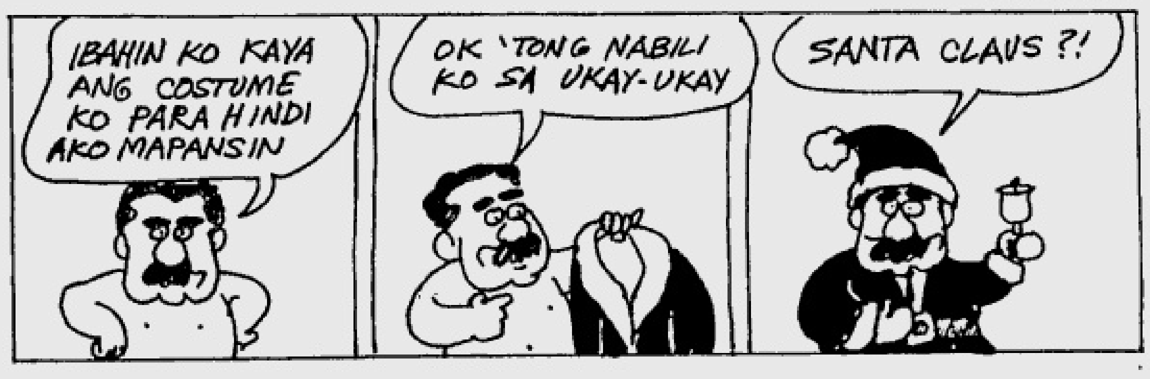
4/22/03

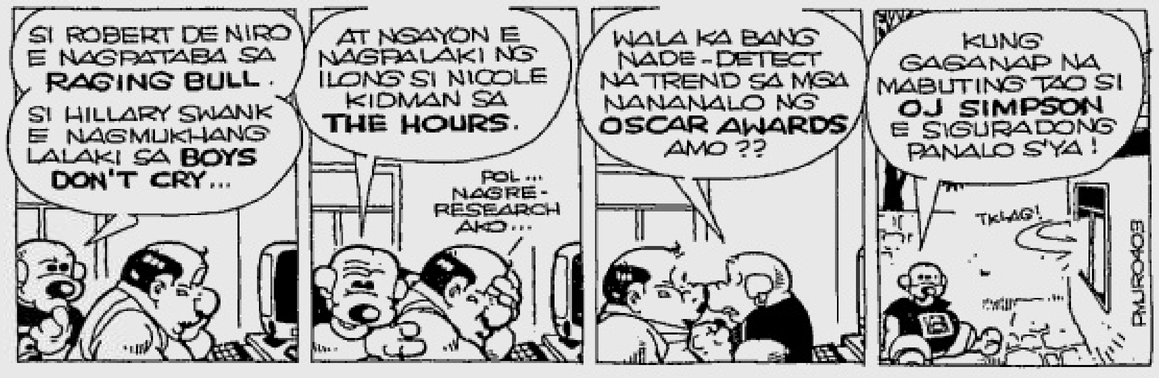
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


IBAHIN KO KAYA ANG COSTUME KO PARA HINDI AKO MAPANSIN
OK 'TONG NABILI KO SA UKAY-UKAY
SANTA CLAUS ?!

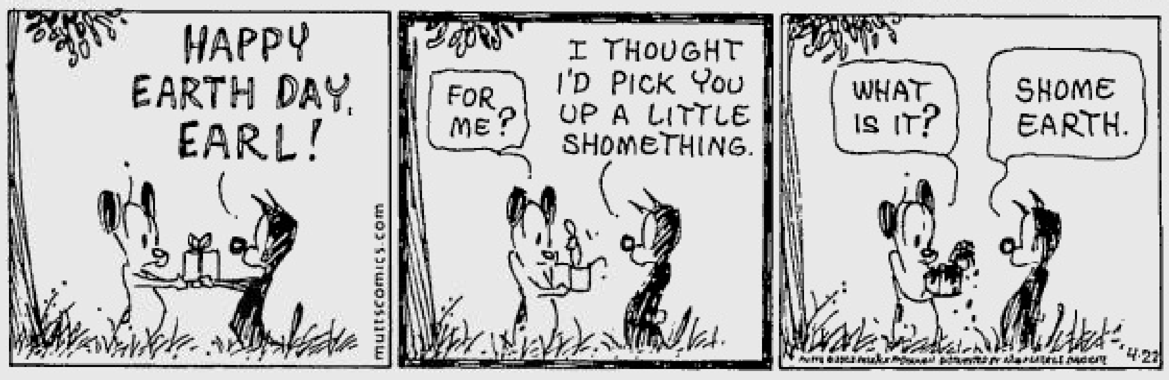
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


SI ROBERT DE NIRO E NAGPATABA SA RAGING BULL.
SI HILLARY SWANK E NAGMUKHANG LALAKI SA BOYS DON'T CRY...
AT NGAYON E NAGPALAKI NG ILONG SI NICOLE KIDMAN SA THE HOURS.
POL... NAGRE-RESEARCH AKO...
WALA KA BANG NADE-DETECT NA TREND SA MGA NANANALO NG OSCAR AWARDS AMO ??
KUNG GAGANAP NA MABUTING TAO SI OJ SIMPSON E SIGURADONG PANALO S'YA!
TKLAG!
PMJR0403

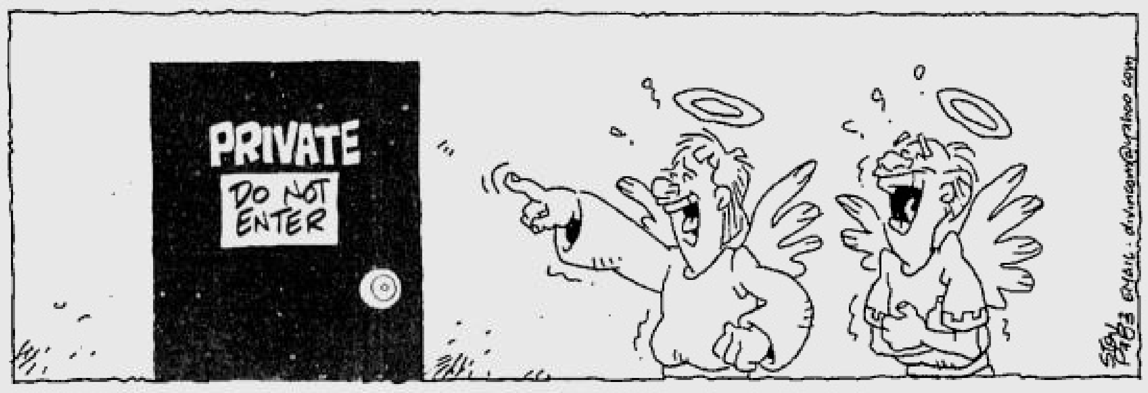
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


HAPPY EARTH DAY, EARL!
muttscomics.com
FOR ME?
I THOUGHT I'D PICK YOU UP A LITTLE SHOMETHING.
WHAT IS IT?
SHOME EARTH.
4-22

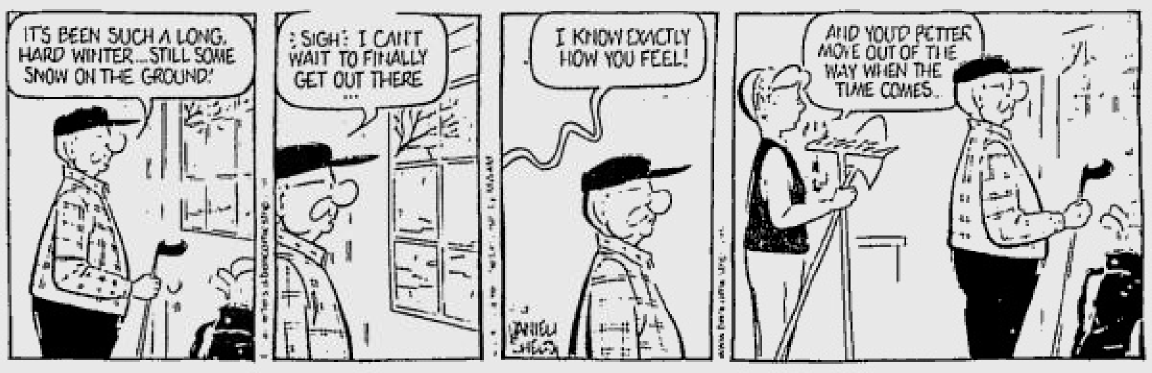
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


PRIVATE
DO NOT ENTER
STEV PAB 03

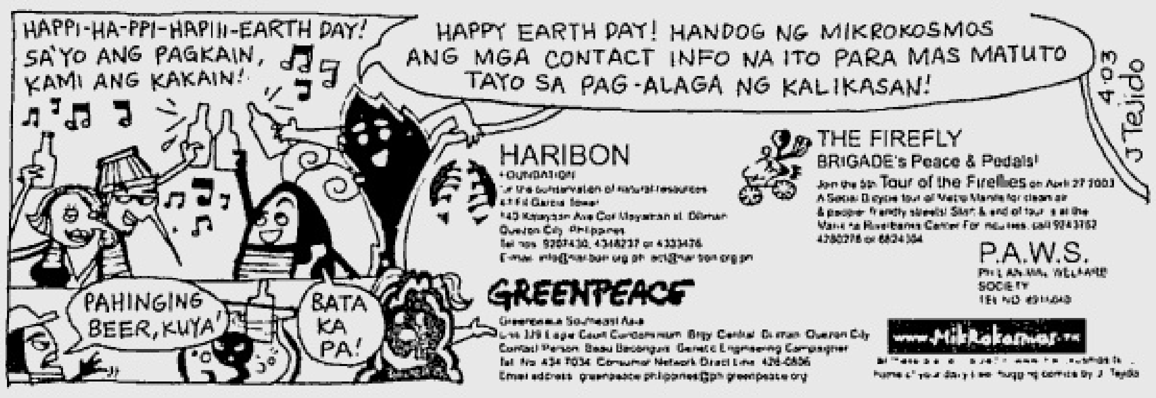
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


IT'S BEEN SUCH A LONG, HARD WINTER...STILL SOME SNOW ON THE GROUND!
:SIGH: I CAN'T WAIT TO FINALLY GET OUT THERE ...
I KNOW EXACTLY HOW YOU FEEL!
AND YOU'D BETTER MOVE OUT OF THE WAY WHEN THE TIME COMES.
DANIEL SHELTON

MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


HAPPI-HA-PPI-HAPIII-EARTH DAY! SA'YO ANG PAGKAIN, KAMI ANG KAKAIN!
HAPPY EARTH DAY! HANDOG NG MIKROKOSMOS ANG MGA CONTACT INFO NA ITO PARA MAS MATUTO TAYO SA PAG-ALAGA NG KALIKASAN!
4-03 J Tejido
PAHINGING BEER, KUYA!
BATA KA PA!
HARIBON FOUNDATION
THE FIREFLY BRIGADE's Peace & Pedals!
Join the 5th Tour of the Fireflies
P.A.W.S.
GREENPEACE
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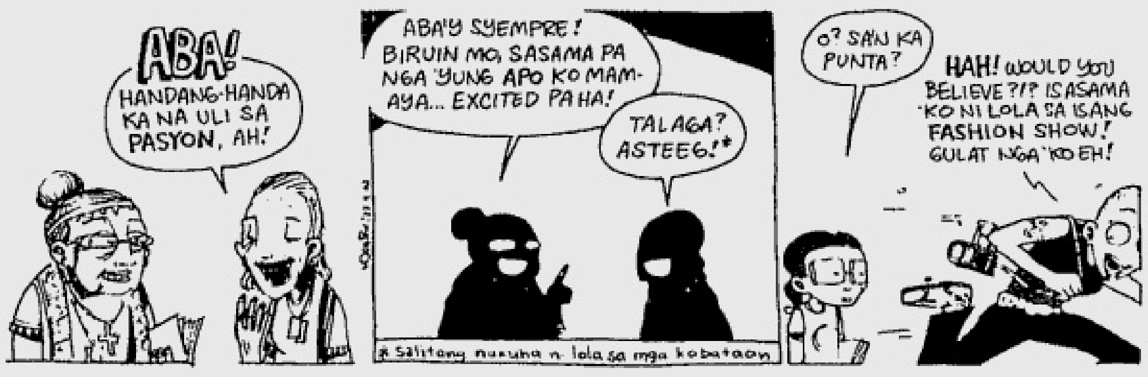
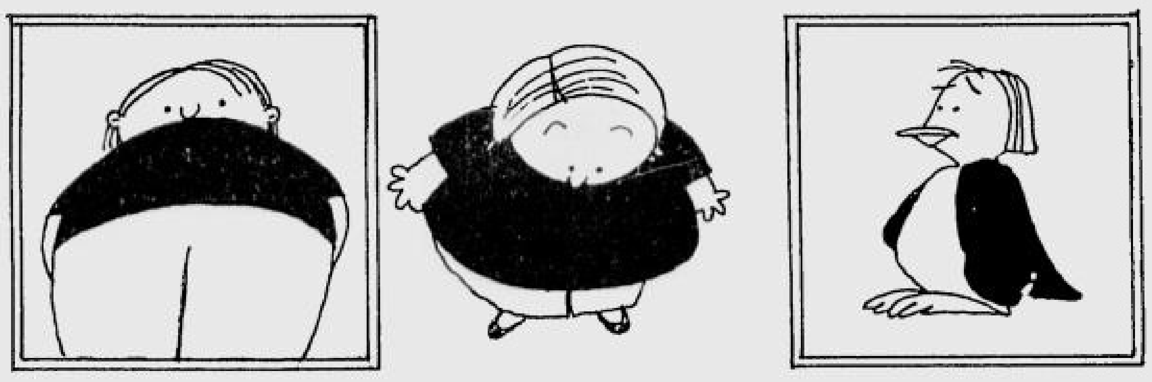
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


ABA! HANDANG-HANDA KA NA ULI SA PASYON, AH!
ABA'Y SYEMPRE! BIRUIN MO, SASAMA PA NGA 'YUNG APO KO MAMAYA... EXCITED PA HA!
TALAGA? ASTEEG!*
* Salitang nauuna n lola sa mga kabataan
O? SAN KA PUNTA?
HAH! WOULD YOU BELIEVE ?!? ISASAMA 'KO NI LOLA SA ISANG FASHION SHOW! GULAT NGA 'KO EH!

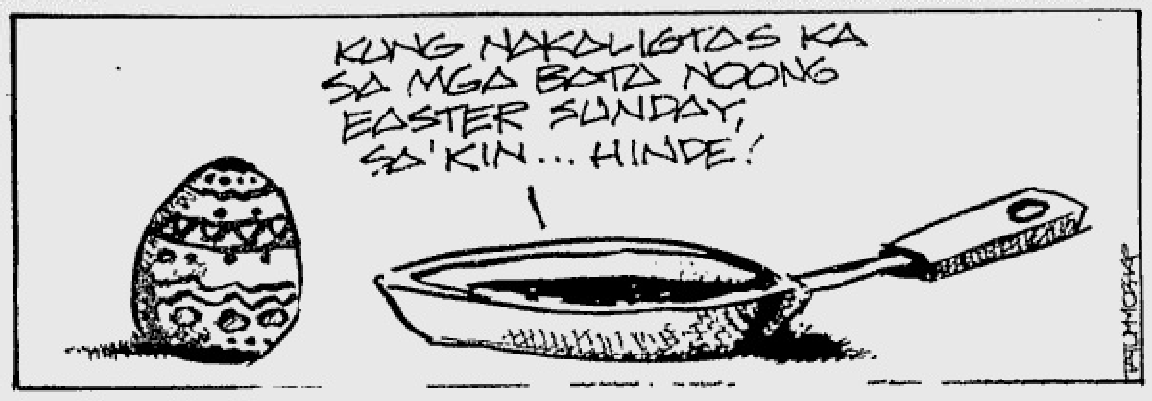
FURRY LOGIC

BY SUSIE AND CALVIN



TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


KUNG NAKALIGTAS KA SA MGA BATA NOONG EASTER SUNDAY, SA'KIN... HINDE!
PMILAMBILING

Keeping summer safe and fun for kids

Text by Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

THE LONG school break can mean endless hours of sun and fun. But it can also bring small and serious injuries. Children can suffer from falls, scratches and burns, and sometimes even fall victim to more serious accidents like drowning.

The National Safe Kids Campaign (NSKC) said accidents peaked during the summer months because children were supervised less, had more free time and engaged in more outdoor activities. But even at home, kids could still have accidents.

A recent report from NSKC showed that each year about 4.5 million children, 14 years old and below, were injured at home. Out of this number, some 2,700 died, more than 70 percent of whom were aged four and under.

"Children are active and adventurous by nature," says Lec Roque, product manager of Pfizer Inc. Consumer Healthcare. "They always try new things and are curious about them. As adults and parents, we have to make sure that we keep them away from any situation that could harm them or even endanger their lives."

Pfizer Inc., a leading pharmaceutical firm, through its newly launched Pfizer Loving Care (PLC) program, has come out with an informative "kiddie" safety checklist for summer. The checklist contains lifesaving steps parents and caregivers can take to protect their loved ones from summer injuries.

"We must not neglect minor details that could tempt them to do something that we will regret in the future. It doesn't hurt to follow some ground rules to make sure the kids have a fun and safe summer," says Roque.

The summer checklist was launched recently via a family day at the Rockwell Club's The Blue Shade, Rockwell Center, Makati City. It was an afternoon of fun and games for kids. The place was transformed into a big kiddie play house. There were Little Tykes slides and rides, colorful balloons in different sizes, bubble machine, face painting and cotton candies. A storytelling session aimed at encouraging kids to have a safe school break capped the event.

Aside from launching the checklist, Pfizer also introduced its PLC program consisting of a series of educational sessions for mothers and caregivers. Complementing the program is the company's childcare line—Desitin, Terramycin, Combantrin, Bonamine Chewables for Kids and Caladryl.

WHICH IS IT
WHICH WOOZY WA'

AMIEL Sabangan tries to solve a maze game at the launch of Pfizer Loving Program.

MAVI Reyes gets a quick relief from rash.

Accidents peak in the summer as kids are supervised less, have more free time and outdoor activities

Pfizer is holding different summer informational activities and community events around Metro Manila. Parents, caregivers and kids will learn about important summertime risks through interactive and colorful displays, activities and games.

Pfizer sponsored recently a pre-school tour in collaboration with the Department of Health, which aimed to educate children about enjoying the sun while being careful to have adequate protection against its harmful rays. Activity booklets were distributed during the tour.

This month, Pfizer supports activities that will teach moms about Child Discipline Basics and Child Nutrition. Next month, Pfizer supports "Elementary Parenting" activities that will focus on the ABCs of pregnancy and ways to encourage kids to love school and learning.

Safety checklist

For indoor:

- Keep matches away from children.
- Put any sharp objects like scissors and knives in a safe place.
- Closely monitor children playing with toys that have sharp or hard edges like robots, cars, Barbie and walking dolls.
- Keep guns unloaded and locked inside a drawer or cabinet.
- Store gas and fuel in proper containers.
- With regard to electrical equipment, keep the following in mind: a) Keep cords out of reach of children to prevent them from pulling down an appliance or getting strangled by the cords; b) Keep children away from electric fans; c) Unplug tools and appliances and keep them in a secure place after use.
- When there are pets at home, make sure they have been vaccinated against rabies. Deworm pets regularly and keep litter boxes clean. Keep pet foods well away from human food so kids do not mistake pet treats (i.e. nibblers, meat strips, etc.) for their own snacks.

For outdoors:

- Never leave children unattended in or near the water.

Always supervise young children near water, including pools, spas, toilets, bathtubs and buckets.

- Insist that children wear flotation devices when on boats, near open bodies of water or participating in water sports.
- Make sure children wear helmets when riding a bicycle or scooter, rollerblading or skateboarding. Make sure the helmets fit properly. Teach children to observe the rules of the road. Show them how to obey traffic laws.
- Protect children from excessive exposure to sun. Use a sunscreen with a high sun protection factor (SPF). Even if your child doesn't seem to burn, sun damage can occur.
- Supervise children whenever they use play equipment. Make sure children stay clear of the front and back of swings that are in use.
- Keep children away from barbecue grills and bonfires and always have water handy when there is an open fire. Only adults should use lighter fluid.
- Strap children using properly fitting seat belts when traveling by car or airplane.
- Never let a child under age 10 cross a street alone. Teach children to obey traffic rules for pedestrian.
- Always supervise children in playgrounds or the backyard. Make sure they are playing on a safe surface, such as mulch, rubber or fine sand.

Some of the tips may seem common sensical but they are sometimes forgotten by busy parents.

E-mail the author at vbaga@inquirer.com.ph

THROUGH storytelling session, kids are encouraged to have a safe summer vacation.

LEC Roque (left) shows Pfizer's range of child-care products moms can readily use for the kids' itch, rashes, wounds and abrasions.

Don't marry for money.
And don't make the same mistake with a home loan.

Some home loans tempt you with a cash reward. But before you sign up, check the terms. Will you have to pay higher interest rates? Is the loan term longer than necessary?

Filipino elders often advise *"huwag magpabulag sa pera."* That's why HSBC doesn't offer you money. Instead, it offers you SAVINGS.

With a home loan from HSBC, you can cut interest payments and enjoy savings throughout the life of your loan. Our advanced Home Loan Simulator shows you instantly how your monthly amortization can be adjusted to suit your budget or shorten your loan term.

Let HSBC's international expertise and local insight help you make the right choice, right from the start. For more information, visit our website at www.hsbc.com.ph.

Call 878-5151 and ask your Home Loan Officer about our Housewarming Gifts

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New fun sport gains popularity

ULTIMATE Frisbee has arrived in Manila.

Ultimate Frisbee is played by two teams of seven players in a playing field similar in size to a soccer field. The teams pass the 175 gram disc back and forth in an attempt to move it from one end of the field to the other (called the end zone). A point or goal is scored when one team catches the disc in the opponent's end zone.

Ultimate Frisbee is a cross between soccer (teamwork, passing, accuracy, speed and endurance), basketball (teamwork and the use of a pivot foot because running with the disc is not allowed), and American Football, Rugby and Aussie Football (a team scores in an end zone). It is a game of speed, skill and endurance that requires total teamwork and sportsmanship.

Its most unique feature is that there are no referees/officials in Ultimate Frisbee games. Ultimate was created as a "gentleman's game" with simple, basic rules. If someone breaks a rule or commits a foul, the opposing team calls a foul. If the player who committed the foul agrees, the appropriate penalty is enforced. If the player disagrees with the call, nobody argues about it and it is settled quickly and peacefully and the play resumes. The "spirit of the game" is so important such that in Ultimate competitions, one of the highest accolades a team can get is the "Spirit" award, based on the votes of all competing teams as to which squad has displayed the best "Spirit of the Game" or sportsmanship.

The Jack 'n Jill Nova Ultimate Frisbee events, according to Kim Manalo, brand manager of Jack 'n Jill Nova, has a steadily growing following at its regular Beginner's Night held every Monday night at San Lorenzo Park in Makati and pick-up games held during weekends at the Fort Bonifacio field.

Ebong Joson, stage actor and film star of such movies as "Goodbye, America" and "The Great Raid," has been an Ultimate Frisbee fanatic for sometime now.

Ultimate Frisbee was conceived in the late '60s by a group of Columbia University undergraduates. The sport has since grown in popularity through the decades, spreading in the United States and Europe. Based on an estimate by the Ultimate Players Association (UPA), the governing body in the US, there are at least 100,000 men and women playing Ultimate in America. The game is now being played in more than 50 countries across the globe with competitions held in all continents.

The recently concluded 1st International Beach Ultimate Tournament in Boracay was the first of its kind in this part of Asia, counting a total of 10 international teams competing for the top slot, with the strong contingent from Hong Kong emerging as overall champion.

In 1999, a group of expatriates introduced Ultimate Frisbee to Manila. Tim Sullivan, a member of that group, said, "We began with a handful of friends, growing to a terminal size of around 18 players. The team slogan, 'just put it in' strengthened the identity of the players and our love for the sport. It keeps us together."

Bart Edes, who represented the European team in the recent Jack 'n Jill Nova 1st International Beach Ultimate Frisbee Tournament in Boracay has this to say, "I foresee great potential in Frisbee as a popular sport. It has already gained worldwide acceptance."

JACK 'n Jill Nova Ultimate Frisbee series puts a new spin on an old sport.

Take Charge Doc!

Nicky S. Montoya, M.D.

MEDICard

Looking to learn more about your benefits under your MEDICard coverage? Do you want to be clear on the procedures, which allow you to avail of MEDICard's services? Get your information straight from MEDICard's Medical Director, DR. NICKY S. MONTOYA.

FAQs (frequently asked questions)

Is cauterization of warts a covered procedure?

The electro-cauterization of warts is done by directing a small probe with electric current running through it to the warts tissue--"cauterizing" and "burning" it. This treatment works well, but can leave a small scar. As a rule of thumb, removal of warts from the submandibular line (an imaginary line just below the jaw separating the neck area from the face) down, and if done not for "aesthetic purposes", are covered. For cauterization of these non-cancerous skin growths on the facial region, only those that are noted to cause functional impairment, such as warts on eyelids causing difficulty in eye opening or the presence of significant pain, may be covered.

Meet your MEDICard Team

Meet **Dr. Maria Rosario S. Alcañeses**, our accredited specialist based in Makati Medical Center (MMC). Dr. Mary Rose, as she is fondly called, finished her degree in Medicine at UERM-MMC and has been an accredited MEDICard medical service provider since 1999. She specializes in Pediatrics, finishing her residency training at the Philippine Children's Medical Center. She also subspecializes in Pediatric Pulmonology. Doc Mary Rose is a researcher for the Tropical Disease Foundation at MMC and has special interest in controlling Tuberculosis in the Philippines. MEDICard members may visit her for consultations. She holds clinic at Room 218, from Tuesdays to Thursdays, 5 to 7 PM and on Saturdays from 2:30 to 4:30 PM.

At St. Luke's Medical Center (SLMC), members may seek the services of pediatric specialist **Dr. Melwyda Pandy**. "Doktora Pandy", a Medicine graduate of UERM-MMC joined MEDICard in 1998. She is a faculty member of SLMC's school of Medicine and the current President of the hospital's Pediatric Alumni Association. She is also a member of the Philippine Medical Association and a Diplomate of the Philippine Pediatric Society. Doc Melwyda is married to accredited Orthopedic Surgeon, Dr. Virgilio Pandy. Members may visit her at Room 420 of the Medical Arts Bldg., every Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 1 to 4 PM and on Tuesdays. Thursdays and Saturdays from 9 AM to 12 noon.

Dr. Cecilio T. Gempesaw is MEDICard's accredited specialist based in the Community Health Development Cooperative (CHDC) Hospital, the former Clinica Anda. Doc Cecilio finished Medicine at the University of the East. He took his residency training for both his specialization in General Surgery and his subspecialization in Family Medicine at Brokenshire Memorial Hospital, Davao City. He has been in the practice of his profession for more than 35 years now and joined MEDICard in 1993. His experience and training in his field has made him a Fellow to the Philippine College of Surgeons and the Philippine College of Surgery. Members may visit him for consultations at Room 107 of CHDC Hospital located at Don F. Anigo St., Davao City from Mondays to Saturdays, 9AM to 12 noon and from 3 to 5 PM, Mondays to Fridays except Wednesdays.

We encourage all MEDICard members to voice out their concerns and issues at hand. BE HEARD AND BE READ. You can write DR. NICKY S. MONTOYA at 9/F Sagittarius Bldg. H.V. De la Costa St., Salcedo Village, Makati City or e-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com. For feedback on availment of our services, e-mail us at feedback@medicardphils.com.

For inquiries on individual or family membership, dial 818-2161. For group or corporate membership, dial 810-1503 or 817-4985 and look for a membership consultant. For Cebu Sales Office call (032) 253-5031; For Davao Sales Office call (082) 224-6931/305-3386.

TEXT MEDICard for your queries: 0917-7518365 (Globe) or 0919-2476240 (Smart). Please don't forget to include your complete name and landline number where MEDICard could reach you. Log on to www.medicardphils.com.

MEDICard is the first and only HMO in the Philippines and the whole Asian region to be ISO 9002 certified.

ISO 9002

Build up a healthy immune system

TO PREVENT Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) infection, medical experts recommend a balanced diet, regular exercise, sufficient rest and building up a healthy immune system.

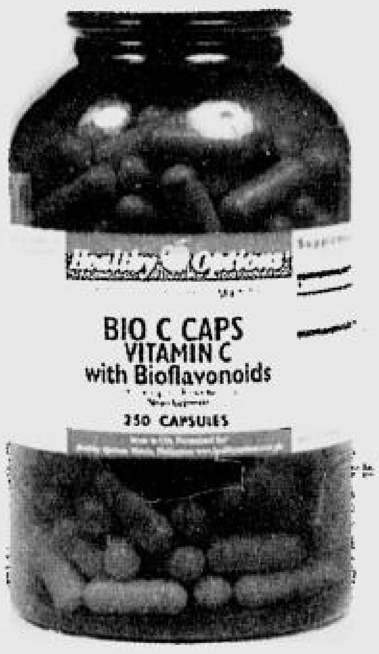
Healthy Options provides readers a prescription for a good body immunity by recommending vitamin supplements.

Vitamin A helps the body repair itself. While studying the effects of Vitamin A in children, one doctor observed that even a moderate deficiency can weaken the immune defenses of a child's respiratory tract. Vitamin-A deficiency causes damage to the naturally protective mucous membrane barrier of the respiratory tract.

Vitamin B6 may especially help seniors. Researchers at Tufts University School of Nutrition in Boston discovered that when healthy elderly people had Vitamin B6 almost completely taken out of their diet, immune response went down. Vitamin C bolsters white blood cells. Vitamin D is present in most multivitamin/mineral supplements as well as most calcium supplements and is safe at the levels in these supplements. People at risk for D deficiency include those who avoid milk products and those who don't get outdoors much.

Vitamin E helps fight infection. It also helps prevent oxidative damage in the body. Like iron, zinc is crucial for making sure that the first wave of immune fighters, lymphocytes, has enough troops.

Healthy Options has stores located at 1/L of Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Mandaluyong City; Rustan's Supermarket, Makati City; 2/L of Festival Supermall, Filinvest, Alabang; G/L of Ayala Center, Cebu City; LG/F of SM City, North Edsa; 2/L of SM City Manila; Greenbelt, Ayala Center, Makati City; at 2/L of SM Megamall B, Edsa, Mandaluyong City; at SM Pampanga and now at SM Bicutan.



BIO C Caps vitamins with bioflavonoids by Healthy Options Natural Supplements

On cravings, diet and natural Viagra

From page C1

Cola—Caffeine and sugar are what you desire.

Eggs—You need protein.

Cheese—Your real hunger is for phosphorus and calcium. Note: Broccoli is rich in these.

Apples—You may be missing calcium, magnesium, phosphorus and potassium.

Nuts—You can use more protein, B vitamins or fat in your diet. People under stress tend to eat more nuts than relaxed individuals.

Peanut butter—Perhaps your B intake is insufficient, and you are under stress.

Bananas—When you reach out for this regularly, you lack potassium.

Olives—People with underactive thyroids reach out for them. Green or black, you are after the salt.

Milk—Still craving this as an adult? It can be the amino acids—tryptophan (which has a calming effect on the nerves), leucine and lysine.

Onions—Indicates lung/sinus problems.

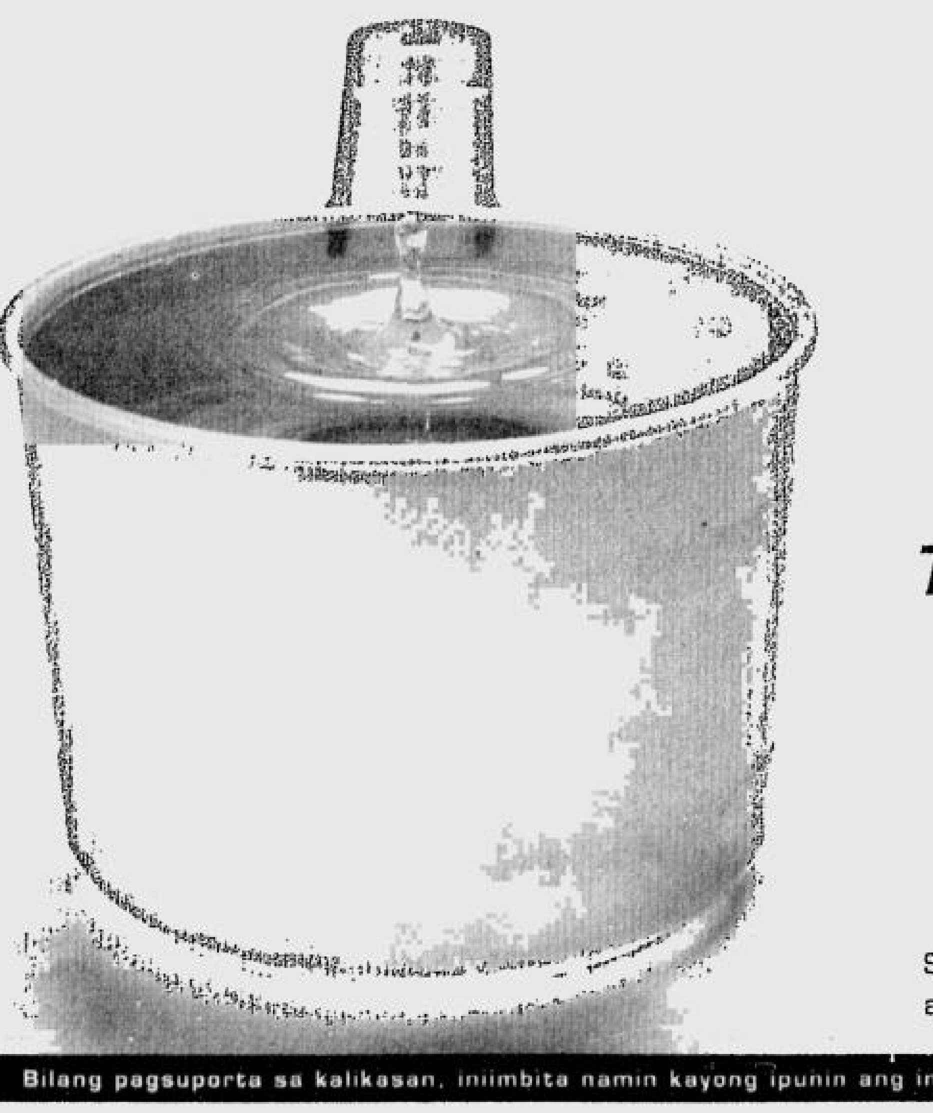
Tart fruits —A persistent craving can indicate liver/gall bladder problems.

What is your favorite affirmation?

Depends on my mood and my goal for the day. It's all in my closing line.

I declare love and light for myself, I wish it also for you.

Source: "The Vitamin Bible" by Earl Mindell (National Book Store)



Tabong-bahay.

Magtipid. Magtabo.
T.A.B.O.
Tubig Ay Buhay
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
SA PAGDIRIWANG NG EARTH DAY

Siguradong may tabo ang tahanang-Pinoy sapagkat ang pagtitipid ng tubig ay responsibilidad ng bawat pamilya. Kaya ituloy lang ang paggamit ng tabo.

Bilang pagsuporta sa kalikasan, iniimbita namin kayong ipunin ang inyong mga lumang dyaryo para sa nalalapit na Newspaper Drive. Tumawag sa 897-8808 loc. 209.

CHINGGAY Andrada teaching her famous uppercut

Skin care spa right on the beach

FOR WORKOUT bums who always need some incentive to get their bodies in motion, Nivea may have come up with the perfect solution: working out with a fantastic view. The view of the early morning Boracay shores, to be exact. Or for those who prefer a different type of view, the sight of babes in their beachwear.

Nivea, known worldwide for their gently effective skincare line, brought in the fitness experts just for the lucky guests of Famous the Voyage Party 4.

Chinggay Andrada lead the vigorous, blood-pumping kickboxing workout a couple of hours after sunrise.

Among the guests who joined her were Rovilson Hernandez of "Gameplan," Dyan Castillejo and Marc Nelson of "Sports Unlimited," and models Rissa Samson, Robby Mananquil, Nicolette Belle, Phoemela Baranda, Mikey Carrion, Ryan Villareal, Valerie delos Santos, Bianca Valerio, Kit Baragas, Ton Lao and Uriah Van Der Bos.

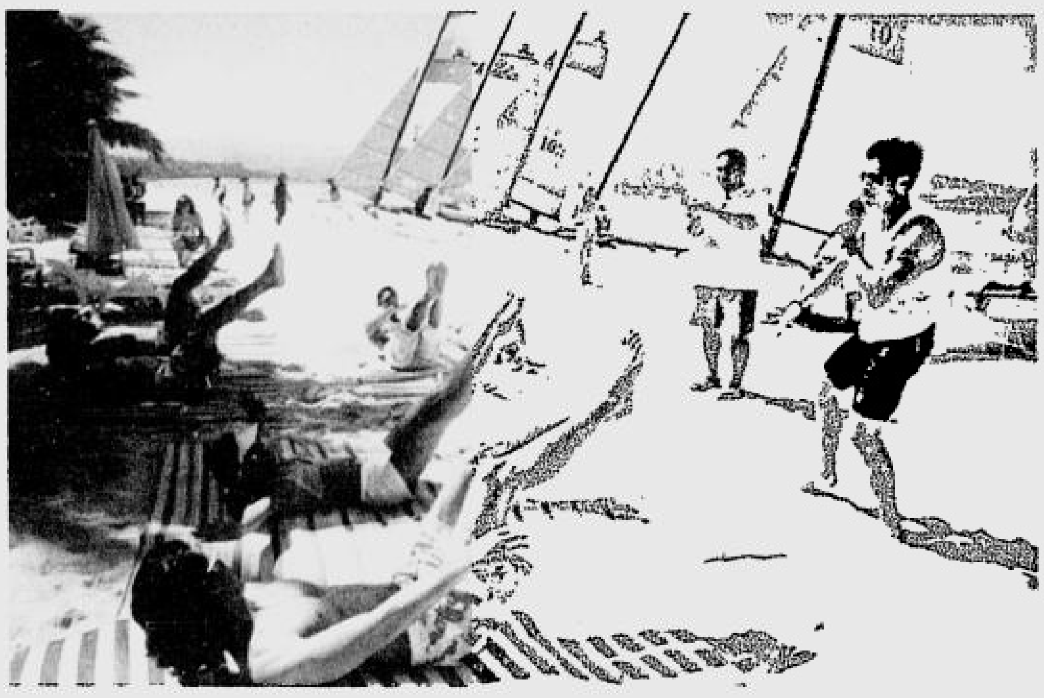
For those who preferred a more sedate yet equally challenging workout, Nivea brought in Michael Chua, the Pilates guru. Stretching their bodies on the beach were Liezl Martinez and daughter Alyanna; Rock Star owners Jojo Manlongat and Miko Palanca; Angelica Suiza of Adidas; Paolo Bediones, Tricia Cu-Unjieng, Diether Ocampo, Romina Urra, Jennie Epperson, Desu Gonzalez, Richie Santos and sister Marielle.

Nivea marketing manager Rica King and brand managers Ida Dizon and Belle Ortega also opened the Nivea Spa right on the beach, complete with cabanas, comfy mattresses and expert masseuses to soothe away the aches and pains from the earlier workouts, and then some.

The Nivea Sun line is the ideal partner for the beach and any other outing this summer. Nivea Sun products include the Spray SPF 20, Face Cream SPF 30, Lotion SPF 30 and For Kids SPF 25. Nivea products are available at all major department stores.

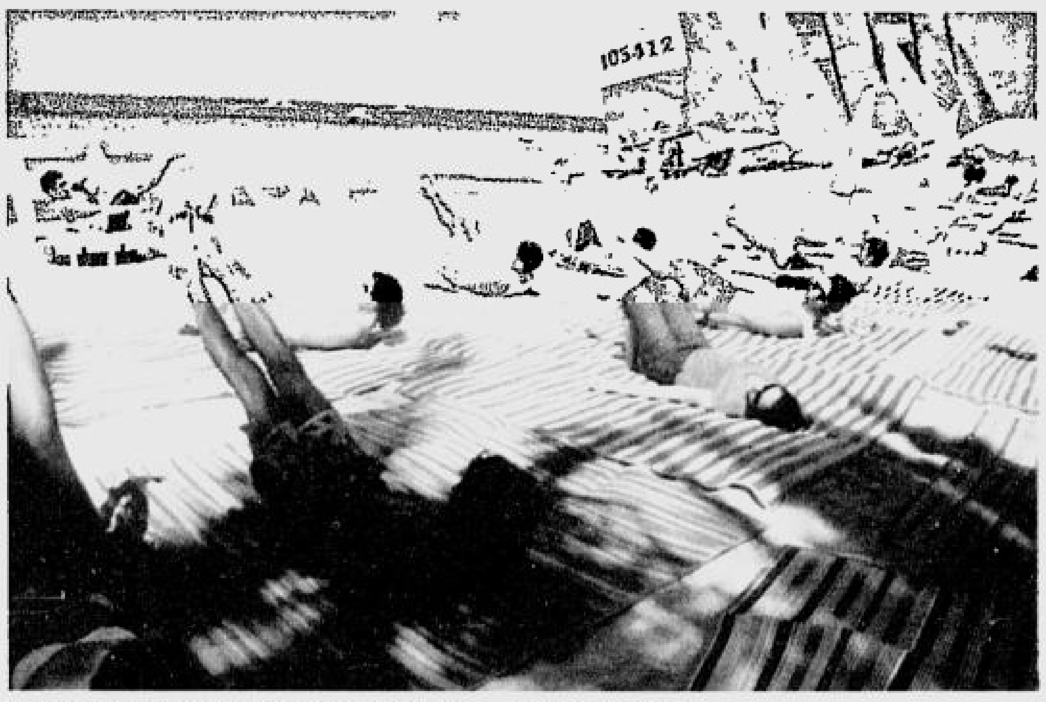
"SPORTS Unlimited" host Dyan Castillejo and model Paolo Paraiso

MODELS officially open Nivea Spa Lounge.



PILATES instructor Mike Chua warming up the class before lower ab workout

KEREN Pascual, Chinggay Andrada, Dale Villar and Nivea's Rica King



WITH a view like that, you'd want to work on your abs all day.

A good marriage should last a lifetime.

A good home loan shouldn't.

Filipinos believe that marriage is *panghabang-buhay*, a lifelong commitment. But a home loan? Don't get stuck any longer than you have to.

That's why with HSBC, we'll show you how you can pay off your loan sooner. With our advanced Home Loan Simulator, you can look at various budget-friendly repayment options that help you save on interest payments.

Let HSBC's international expertise and local insight help you make the right choice, right from the start. For more information, visit our website at www.hsbc.com.ph.

Call 878-5151 and ask your Home Loan Officer
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Issued by The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited

Reincarnation not incompatible with Christianity

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

Part II

"LICAUCO does not name one doctor of the Church, one great theologian, one saint, or one mystic who thinks the same way (about reincarnation)."

I did not name any theologian who believed in reincarnation because I was completely unprepared for that impromptu interview on the radio.

The following doctor and/or saint of the church believed in the possibility of multiple rebirth at one time or another in their religious careers: St. Gregory of Nazianzus (A.D. 329-389) who was bishop of Constantinople said that reincarnation is not incompatible with resurrection, for he asserts the following:

"(Some hold) that the soul exchanges one man for another man, so that the life of humanity is continued always by means of the same souls. As for ourselves, we take our stand upon the tenets of the church, and assert that it will be well to accept only so much of these speculations as is sufficient to show that those who indulge in them are to a certain extent in accord with the doctrine of the Resurrection. Their statement, for instance, that the soul, after its release from this body, insinuates itself into certain other bodies is not absolutely out of harmony with the revival of which we hope for."

Escasa in his article also objected to my calling Origen "the greatest theologian of the early church" and quoted a CD-Rom history of the church saying in part that Origen had remained controversial even after his death.

Well, this only shows my critic's gross ignorance of the early history of the Church. He has apparently read only the official version of the Church which has condemned and declared Origen a heretic. Of course the church was expected to downplay Origen's influence after that and even to delete his name from the books if they could. But it cannot be denied that Origen was considered the greatest scriptural authority of the early Church in the same way that St. Thomas Aquinas was highly regarded by the medieval Church.

Let me quote the following passage about Origen from the book, "Reincarnation: the Phoenix Fire Mystery," compiled and edited by Joseph Head and Sylvia L. Cranston:

(Origen was) "the most distinguished and most influential of all the theologians of the ancient church, with the possible exception of Augustine," writes noted German theologian, Adolf Harnack, in his article on Origen in the Britannica. "He is the father of the Church's science; he is the cofounder of a theology which was brought to perfection in the fourth and fifth centuries, and which still retained the stamp of his genius when in the sixth century (the church) disowned its author." At one time St. Jerome considered Origen "the greatest teacher of the Church after the apostles," while St. Gregory of Nyssa called him "the prince of Christian learning in the third century."

> Belief in reincarnation antedates Christianity, and it's embraced by two-thirds of the world's population

Let me conclude this response of mine with the following quotation from a real authority who had studied the subject thoroughly, Dr. Geddes MacGregor, Emeritus Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at the University of Southern California, who received numerous awards for his scholarly works and who has authored over 20 books. Dr. MacGregor said in "Reincarnation in Christianity."

Forbidden notion

"What is certain and may be tragic is that Christians have since generally believed (for not everyone can be expected to know of the muddle, obscurity and inconclusiveness of the politico-ecclesiastical proceedings) that reincarnation is incompatible with Christian faith. They have taken for granted, therefore, that it is a forbidden notion, to embrace that is to renounce Christ and to abandon the Church, which is his body. They have supposed, from what they have either read or heard from bishops, priests and others on whom they have been accustomed to depend, that the fifth Ecumenical Council had closed the door forever."

That is not true, according to Dr. MacGregor. "There is nothing in biblical thought or Christian tradition that necessarily excludes all forms of reincarnationism. We have seen many historical reasons why it has been suppressed both officially and at the popular level, in the history of the Christian Church. We have seen no reason why it must be in conflict with the historic teachings that have come to us through the Bible and Church. We have seen above all, that some form of reicarnationism could much enhance the spirituality of the West, not least at the present time when it stands so much in need of fresh awareness of development and new means of illumination."

In the book "The Future Life: A New Interpretation of the Christian Doctrine," by Frederick A.M. Spencer, there is a reference to a letter by Cardinal Mercier acknowledging that belief in pre-existence and reincarnation had not been formally condemned by the Church. This letter was addressed to a Polish Catholic, Prof. Wicenty Lutoslawski, who taught a form of reincarnationism. In my research in the history of reincarnation I have not come across a papal encyclical specifically condemning reincarnation.

Belief in reincarnation antedates Christianity, and it is embraced by two-thirds of the world's population. Although, admittedly, popular acceptance of a belief does not make it true (the whole world at one time believed the earth was flat), still it seems rather important to ask why so many people in the world believe in reincarnation and only a minority deny it. Don't you think so?

Address letters to this column to 308 Prince Plaza I, 106 Legaspi St., Greenbelt, Makati City or e-mail jlicauco@edsamail.com.ph. Visit my website at http://j.licauco.tripod.com. Listen to my dzMM radio program every Sunday, 6-8 p.m.

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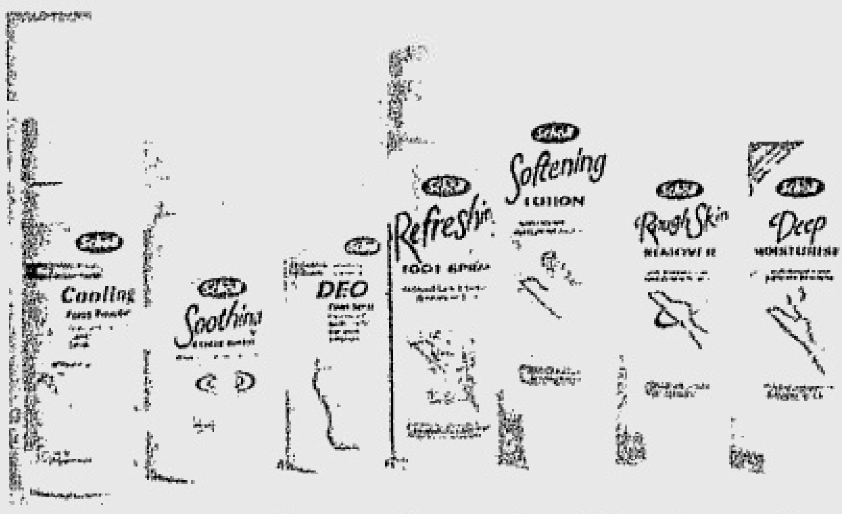
WEEKLY DOSAGE



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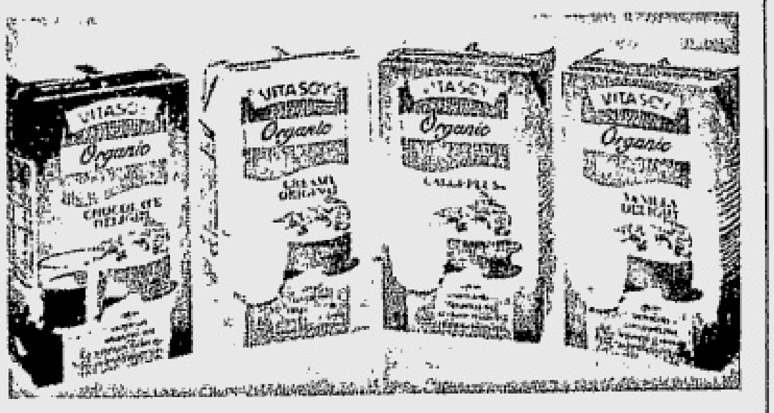

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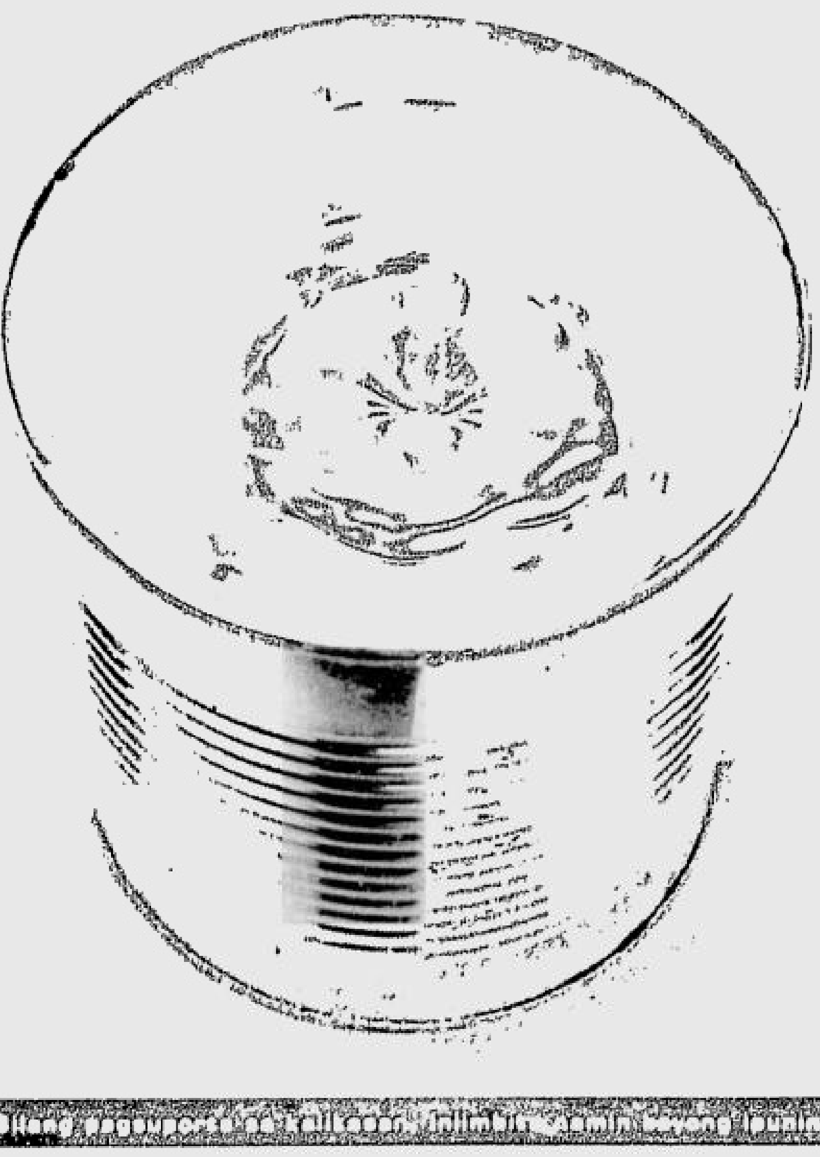

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How to protect yourself…

From page C8

that you can get in shape with four-minute workouts. If that were true, the $800 price tag would be worth it.

Read the fine print

The "fine print" is where you will find disclaimers, limitations and restrictions that advertisers will not openly tell you about unless you ask the right questions. It's not called fine print for nothing. In some print ads, you literally need a magnifying glass to read it.

In infomercials, the fine print is flashed at the bottom of a TV screen from time to time. According to Sue Widemark, fitness writer and host of the HealthRead website, you have to consciously watch out for the fine print because it is flashed so quickly that you have barely time to read it. If you do make the effort though, you might be very surprised with what you'll find out.

Here's what Widemark discovered about Timeworks, a fitness machine that promises a three-in-one workout (cardio, strength and flexibility) in just four minutes. She writes, "First, Gilad (the host of the infomercial) says that by using the Timeworks, you get three workouts in one. He asks the lady (a skinny actress) how she works out. "Well," she answers,

"I do the treadmill or glider for 30 minutes, then do weight training for 15 minutes and stretching for 10 minutes." Gilad tells her she can now take four minutes to get all three parts of her workout in. The small print at the bottom of the screen says, "Comparison of workouts is by the type of exercise and not the benefits." In other words, whereas the Timeworks 4-minute workout may furnish all three types of exercise, it does not compare with the benefits of the 55-minute workout that the lady described!

Infomercial reviews

People are always asking my opinion about fitness gadgets they have seen on TV infomercials. I have a hard time answering them because with so many products being sold, I don't have the time (who does?) to watch all the fitness infomercials being aired, much less try the products. When I want to know more about a specific product, I go to several websites that specialize in infomercial reviews. These websites post reviews from actual users. Whether it's an ab machine or kitchen blender you are planning on buying, I highly suggest a visit to one of the following websites to protect yourself from buying a shoddy or bogus product or to confirm that you are buying an effective and reliable one.

Also, if you have ever bought a product from an infomercial (come on, we all have one or two items gathering dust in our closets), do fellow consumers around the world a favor and send in your own reviews.

- http://www.epinions.com/sprt-All-Exercise_Equipment—The Epinions Community Website helps people make informed buying decisions with good-and-bad product reviews and comparative shopping information.
- www.urateit.com—This six-year-old website is dedicated to helping consumers keep informed about products sold by infomercials or marked with the "As Seen on TV" label.
- www.krbc9.com/diw—Each week, KRBC-9 News (a division of the NBC TV Network) puts infomercial products to the test in their "Does It Work?" segment. You will find reviews of all kinds of products, not just fitness contraptions.
- http://www.fitnessinfomercialreview.com/productreviews.htm—Unbiased (positive and negative) client reviews for everything from supplements to videos to abdominal machines.
- http://www.infomercialscams.com/fitness.htm—Unedited complaints from clients covering all categories of infomercial products (household and cooking, money-making systems, health and beauty, fitness, automotive and many more). Excellent advice on common scams like money back guarantees, hidden shipping charges, etc.
- http://www.acefitness.org/media/watchdog.cfm—This non-profit organization has been called "The Workout Watchdog" of the fitness industry and has commissioned several studies on fitness infomercial products.

Do-it-yourself investigation

If you want more in-depth information on the product you are buying, try doing an Internet search on any of the search engines (Yahoo, Google, Alta Vista, etc.) available. Skip the sites that sell the product because they are biased to death. Look for articles written by fitness trainers, exercise physiologists, university professors and newspaper/TV reporters.

If an infomercial mentions the name of a scientist in connection with a scientific study that supposedly supports the claims of the product they are selling, do an Internet search to find out what that scientist really had to say. Infomercials are famous for twisting the words of health and fitness experts.

If the expert has sold out and is saying scientific nonsense in exchange for a large paycheck, you will usually discover contradicting articles written by his or her peers in the industry.

Granted, it can take hours searching the web for information but I think it's worth the effort to protect yourself from wasting money, feeling foolish and possibly even getting injured by impulsively buying the latest gadget on a fitness infomercial. So surf the net before you whip out that credit card. The information you need is just a mouse click away.

Watch "In Fitness & In Health" Mondays to Fridays on Studio 23 (6-6:30 a.m.) and Net25 (6-6:30 p.m.).

* * *

For questions, past articles and exercises, go to www.tinajuanfitness.com

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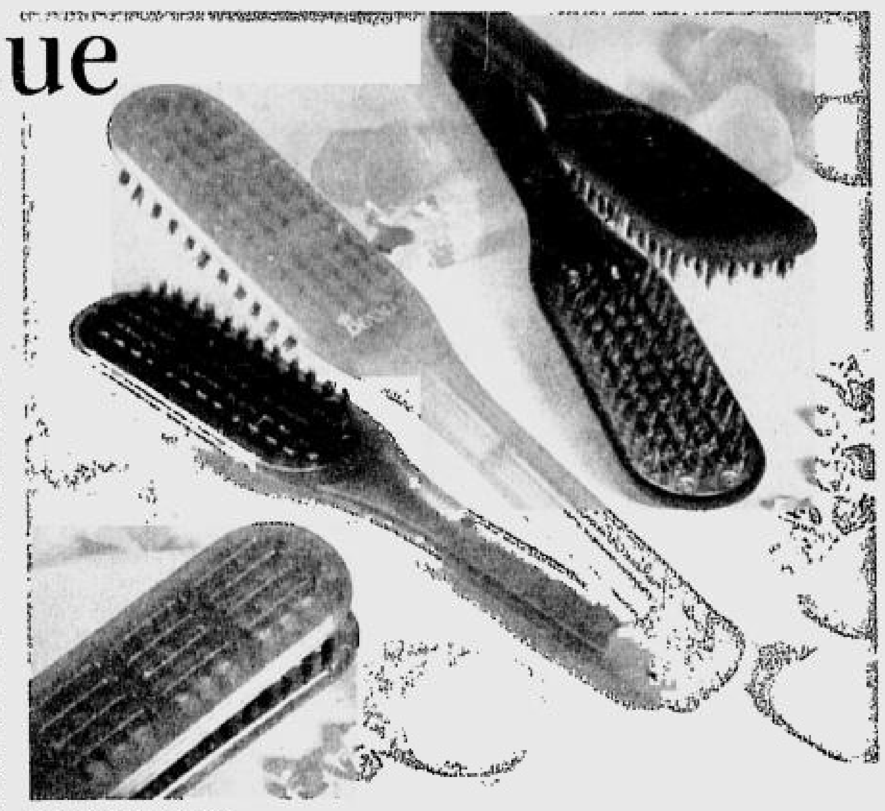
Hair rescue


DENMAN brushes

CITRÉ Shine's hair care line offers not only shampoos and conditioners to bring back life to your hair, but shine treatments and styling products bursting with citrus extracts that other brands may lack. And they smell really good even after sweating it out in the scorching heat.

The perfect complement is Denman, the British-made "hairdresser's hairbrush." Denman is reputed to be a "master brush maker" for its high quality and durable styling tools. The two hair products team up to stand in the frontline against unruly, dry and damaged hair.

For those in need of instant hydration, the Moisture Burst shampoo restores hair's moisture balance, gently cleansing dry or damaged hair without stripping essential nutrients. Its conditioner provides vitamins, eliminating brittleness and leaving hair more manageable and shiny without feeling sticky. Denman's Detangling Comb or Half-Round Styling Brush will gently untangle hair.

For colored hair, Color Brilliance's gentle formula restores manageability and strength while protecting color. It delivers essential nutrients to eliminate brittleness, repair damage and prolong vibrancy of color-treated hair.

For the ultimate gloss, a drop of Color Miracle Protecting Serum (P225) can be added to the conditioner and rubbed on the ends of hair, leaving the mixture for a while before rinsing. Another variant is the Shine Miracle Anti-Frizz Polishing Serum for all hair types.

For the hundred strokes or less, pick Denman's Classic Brush to boost that shine. The smooth, rounded nylon quills are ideal for smoothing, shaping and polishing hair without causing damage. There are the chrome collection, camouflage or animal print designs to choose from.

Frizzy hair will find salvation in Smooth Out's calming shampoo and conditioner. It drenches dry, thirsty hair with protective emollients and helps eliminate frizz. Follow it up with the Get Smooth Straightening Balm, which straightens and softens curly, frizzy or wavy hair for optimum manageability and shine (P295). To style thicker hair, the Fantail Comb, with widely spaced teeth, is perfect.

Daily Revitalizing's mega-vitamin formula nourishes all types of hair for improved strength and added shine. The Grooming Comb is an ideal match.

Citré Shine's 400 ml shampoos and conditioners cost around P185 each.

For styling limp hair, In Style Styling Liquid (P275) gives strong but flexible style support all day, while Big Volume Styling Foam (P245) boosts volume for excellent lift. The Texture Play Chunking Crème (P295) is great for layered hair giving it substance and texture by adding structure, control and shine while conditioning and revitalizing.

Use the Volumizing Free Flow Brush to add body and movement.

Denman's innovation—the Thermo Straightening Brush—offers a fast and simple way to straighten hair when blow-drying. It has two heat-retaining, vented aluminum plates embedded with pure, natural boar bristle. The Thermo Brush leaves hair super straight glossy and manageable. The natural bristles also spread sebum—the hair's natural conditioner—down the hair to give it a brilliant sheen.

Watch promo raffles off free trip to Hawaii

IN October, the World Ironman Triathlon will be celebrating its 25th anniversary with Timex as its official sports watch.

Its latest breakthrough is the Timex Ironman Triathlon Speed and Distance, which uses a custom Garmin GPS satellite receiver to transmit speed, distance and pace to the Ironman watch via a digital FM signal. The Ironman watch displays one's performance while walking, running, biking, and skiing.

The World Ironman Triathlon will be celebrating its silver year in its birthplace, Hawaii. Timex is giving away a round-trip ticket for two to Hawaii, with four days and three nights' hotel accommodations and land transfer. Coupons are available at any of the Timex outlets for a chance to win a trip to Hawaii and other fantastic prizes until June 21.

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- Carrier 2-hp split-type air-conditioning system
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How to protect yourself from infomercial fraud

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan

LAST year, the United States Federal Trade Commission (FTC) revealed in a special report that 40 percent of the 300 fitness and weight loss ads they had studied made at least one false representation and 55 percent of them had at least one unsubstantiated claim. The FTC found that before-and-after pictures can be altered, client testimonials can be bought, health experts are sometimes just actors and the results of scientific studies can be creatively twisted.

Now, this doesn't mean that all fitness or weight loss ads are deceptive. What it means is that you, as a consumer, have to be extra careful to protect yourself from fraud. TV infomercials are of particular concern because they are more convincing than print ads. Infomercials are usually 30 minutes long so they have a lot of time to demonstrate how to use the product, interview experts, present client testimonials and explain scientific studies.

10 commandments

How then can you tell the good from the bad from the ugly? First, let's start with "The Ten Commandments of Buying Fitness Gadgets on TV" according to Liz Neporent, a fitness authority who has written extensively on the subject.

1. If an advertisement claims that you can tone up while lying in bed watching the tube, save your money for the Miracle Mop. There's no such thing as "the no sweat workout that works." If there were, don't you think you'd have done this workout by now?

2. Beware of the phrase "guaranteed or your money back." Read the fine print. The manufacturers may promise that you'll lose four inches in one month—if you stick to a low-fat diet and a far more extensive exercise program.

3. Don't be impressed by the "expert" endorsements. Don't think for a minute that a three-time Mr. Universe built his biceps with some plastic contraption that looks like a model of the Star Ship Enterprise. And never buy anything hawked by an actress who hasn't had a decent gig in more than five years.

4. Don't whip out your credit card just because a product is not sold in stores. Truth is, most of these gizmos are sold in stores—or they will be in a month or two. Sometimes the product is actually cheaper at the store; plus, you can test out the product.

5. Beware of phrases like "three easy payments." One gadget claims to cost "Not $60! Not $50!" but "just two easy payments of $19.95." Add in shipping and handling, and it costs $46.85.

6. Don't be impressed that a product was "awarded a US patent." You can patent a nose-hair clipper for mice if you wanted to. To get a patent, you need to have an original idea, not necessarily a good one.

7. Don't believe that a gadget will enable you to build strength and lose fat simultaneously. Some products make this claim blatantly; others use a more subtle approach. Consider the ThighMaster commercials: A svelte model zips up her pants and says, "Thank you, ThighMaster. I never thought I'd fit into these jeans again." The ThighMaster may help you tone your inner thigh muscles, but it's not going to slim you down.

8. Don't be swayed by scientific terminology. Product manufacturers love to throw around big words. Some of these terms, such as omnikinetics, have no accepted meaning in the scientific community.

9. Don't believe some new contraption is better than free weights or real weight machines. One product manufacturer claims that "with free weights or machines, getting the right form is impossible," but with its gizmo, "there's no way to use the gadget improperly."

10. Hide your credit card between 12 a.m. and 4 a.m. At that late hour, everything kinda looks good. Go to bed.

Neporent says the bottom line is to exercise extreme caution when buying fitness equipment from TV infomercials. According to her, you have no way of judging the quality of a machine or gadget—everything looks better on TV!

False fitness claims

Here are some words of advice from Neporent regarding the claims made by fitness and weight loss infomercials:

- Lose 30 pounds in 30 days. The fact is, no one can accurately predict how much or how fast you'll drop weight. You should be wary of anything that guarantees quick, permanent results.
- Melts fat from your hips, thighs or stomach. There is no way to diet or exercise away fat from a specific part of your body. This so-called "spot reducing"—one of the most oft-mentioned pledges you'll see in ads for fitness equipment—is simply a physiological impossibility. Period.
- No sweat, no effort. No dice. If you're not working hard enough to work up a sweat, you're not working hard enough. Exercise doesn't have to be gruelling and painful, but if it's effortless, don't expect results.
- Total-body workout. On many machines, the arm mechanism is linked to the leg mechanism, so even though your arms are pumping, they're just along for the ride. You aren't getting a better workout, and you aren't necessarily burning more calories.
- Fit in minutes a day. How much fitness can you expect from working out just a few minutes a day? Not much. Most reputable fitness experts maintain that you need to exercise aerobically for at least 20 minutes a session to derive cardiovascular benefits and even longer if your main goal is weight loss. An infomercial for one complex-looking exercise contraption asserts

HOW/ C7

> Infomercials have a lot of time to demonstrate, interview experts, present client testimonials and explain studies

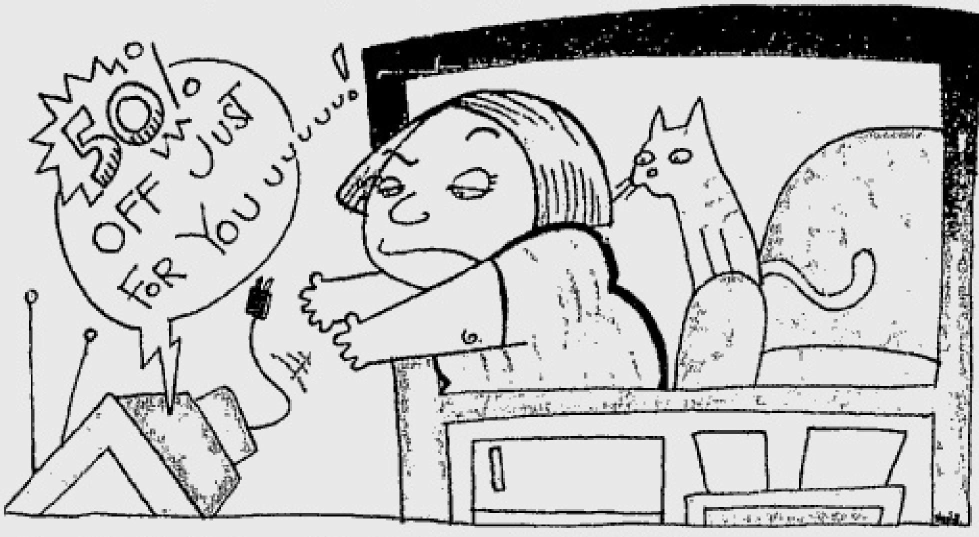
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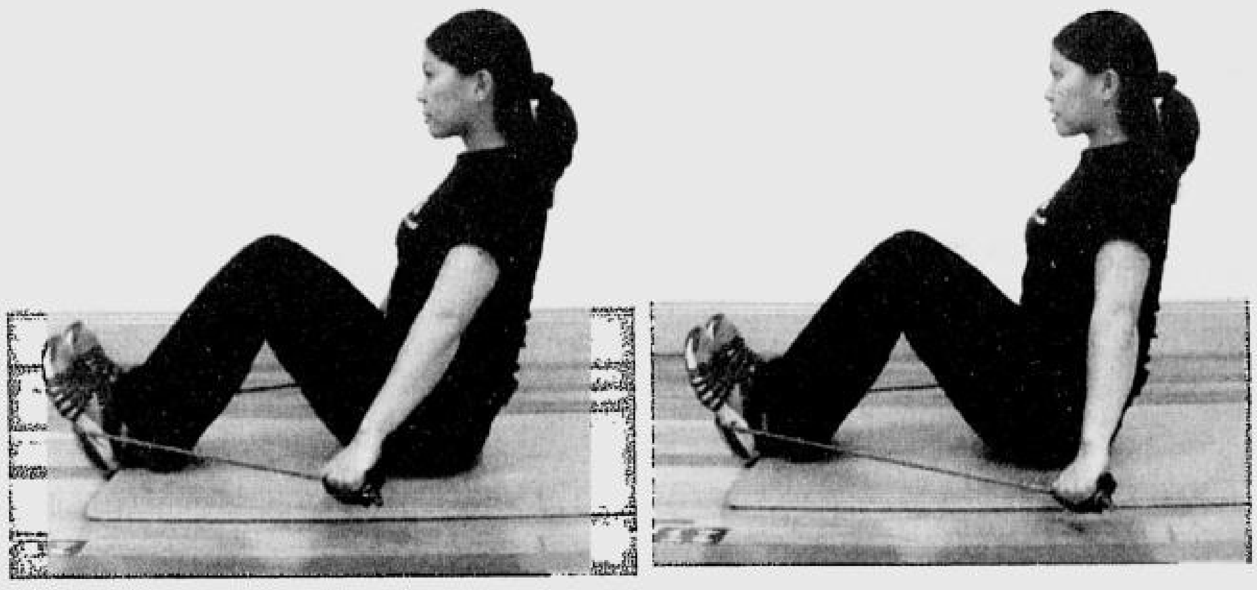
ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Straight arm shoulder extension with rubberband



FIRMS and tightens muscles at the back of shoulders (rear deltoids) and sides of upper back (latissimus dorsi).

Equipment:
Exercise mat and rubberband

Exercise technique:

1. Sit down on the mat with knees bent, feet flexed, and rubberband hooked around the arches of your feet.
2. Keep your straight arms wider than shoulder width with palms facing backwards and knuckles facing downwards.
3. Pull the rubberband backwards a few inches by bringing your shoulder blades together.
4. Slowly return to starting position.
5. Do the desired number of repetitions.

Performance tips:

1. Initiate the movement by squeezing your shoulder blades together rather than just pulling on the rubberband with your hands. You should feel the muscles contracting in the sides of your upper back.
2. The movement in this exercise is subtle. Don't expect to move your arms backwards with a large range of motion.
3. Pay special attention to the positioning of your hands and wrists. Keep your knuckles facing mat so that your wrist stays in a straight alignment with your forearm. If your wrist bends as you do the exercise, you will place unnecessary stress on your wrist joint.
4. Watch that you don't lean forward with your head as you pull backwards with the rubberband.

Repetitions:
Do 10-12 repetitions.

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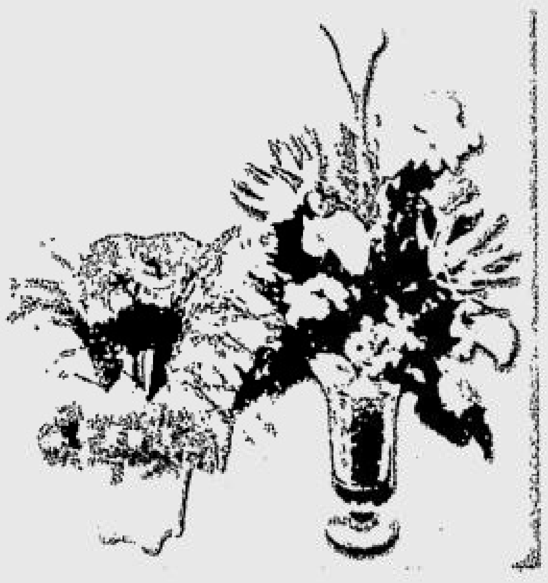

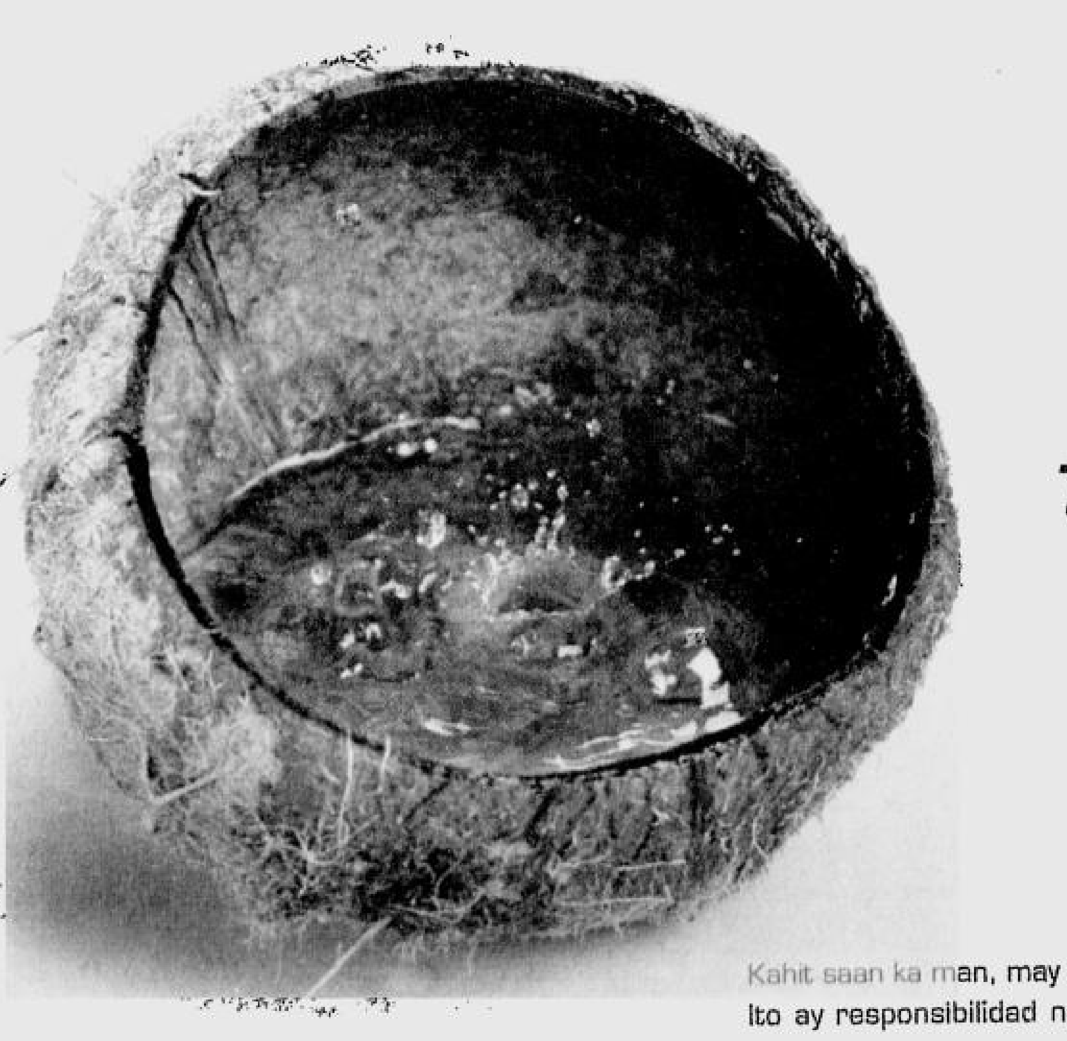

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WATCHING the river run, trekkers also give their Labradors time to enjoy the water.

Trek-and-treating with Labs

By Kurt Phoebus Miñada
Contributor

FOR almost eight years now, my Shadow and I have been visiting this river almost every weekend. It is our favorite since it is the most accessible outdoor destination in our area–only about 10 kms from Batangas City.

Shadow is my dog. He is labrador. We have accompanied countless mountaineers and trained numerous dogs, together with their owners, to the river. Some of the dogs had their first swim there.

Recently, we brought a new group of people and dogs. I spoke to Robert Javier over the phone and he turned out to be a great guy, with a very pleasant temperament. Like his dog, Kojak, he was friendly, even to strangers.

The kind-hearted Mari Lopez was as *mabait* as his handsome dog Jimbo, who I kept calling Bimbo. Vic del Rosario, at his age, was still as energetic as his black Lab, Kimmy. All of the humans, in one way or another, had characters similar to their Labradors. Amazing but true.

I didn't know that the house where we were supposed to stay was owned by Ringo Baja, a close friend and former officemate who opted for early retirement. And so this became a reunion of sorts for me and Ringo.

We had lunch then rested briefly before starting the trek. As expected, the trek was exciting even to those who had done it before, even to the locals who came along to enjoy the river. Robert's wife, Gillete, was as sharp as her name. The strap on one of Vic's sandals had snapped at the very start of the trek. Luckily, Irvin had a spare pair.

REST for weary humans and dogs before the return trek.

All of the humans, in one way or another, had characters similar to their Labradors

Joyful dogs

The trek started at the "Old Crusher" as scheduled. Robert had a hard time, what with three kids and a lovely wife to take care of, which was my fault because I had insisted he bring the kids along. Well, at least the kids enjoyed the trip. But Robert swore, "Next time, only me and my dog. No kids!"

When we released the dogs from their leashes at a certain point, they ran joyfully along the trail shaded by coconut trees. At the "Tinagong Lagusan", the dogs swam in a small pool naturally created by the turbulence of the water current. We then moved on to the "Rocky Forest," a rocky part of the river with tall woody shrubs. The dogs had their experience of bordering, scrambling on rocks in the shallow river bed.

We were on schedule when we reached the "First Deep Throat," a deep section between two walls of sedimentary rocks. As we had to swim against the slow flowing deep water, I collected cameras, cell phones, wallets, watches, lighters and cigarettes, securing them in a waterproof bag. Other things and bags were placed inside a plastic trash bag and brought across the river. The kids sat on inflatable floaters that were dragged across. The dogs swam, enjoying the cool water.

Souvenir shots

When we reached the "Rippling Rapids", we took a break and shot souvenir pictures. Vic combed Kimmy's ruffled hair. It was great to see master and dog together. When Vic lagged behind, Kimmy would wait for him. Resuming our trek, we crossed the "Second Deep Throat". The water was not as deep as expected, or it might have been that we learned from our experience in the first.

There were many local people when we reached our destination, the "Kissing Rocks", which they called *Nagtuon*. Two huge sedimentary rocks leaned against each other and formed a small cave underneath, which had a small waterfall. A very deep pool had formed at the foot of the waterfall.

The locals used to be afraid to go to the "Kissing Rocks" but after learning that I camped and stayed there for days, they started frequenting the place for swimming. They enjoyed the sight of the dogs frolicking in the water, playing "retrieve" with their masters. Swimming under the rocks was like being in a pool with a roof.

Return trek

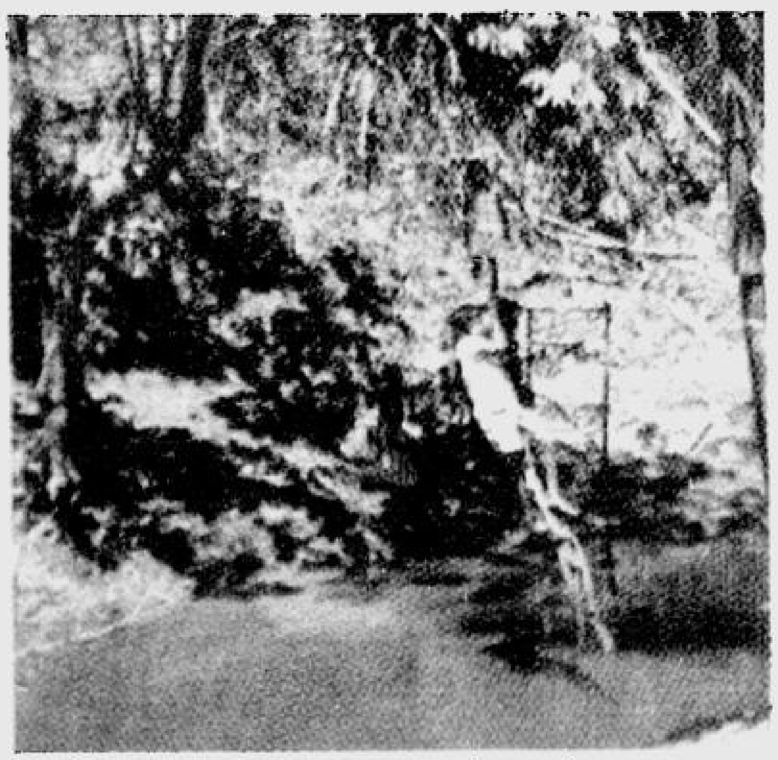
We waited for the afternoon heat to ease before starting on the return trek using another trail. The first part of the return journey was a bit hard. It involved a steep climb and an abrupt descent. After that hard part, the trail was all smooth and easy, sloping down gently.

We had been hiking for 20 minutes when we noticed that Kimmy was not with us. Vic was so worried. Irvin and Gerald went back to search for her and found her beside a brook. Vic was only too happy to be reunited with his dog.

At the resthouse, we planned to stay just a few minutes after dropping off the guys from the Labrador Retrievers Owners Club (LROC), who would be spending the night there. But the few minutes became a few hours filled with laughter and stories as we shared a few bottles of gin. Kojak even had an intermission number that awed the *barangay* captain and the chief *tanod*.

After such a convivial time, we made plans to go camping on Verde Island. Swimming, snorkeling, fishing, socializing over a camp fire—sounds like a lot of fun that both men and beasts can look forward to.

Resort marks Earth Week end



TEST your wits at daring survival skills and games that are set up year round at Earthaven.

EARTHAVEN has lined up a number of activities to mark the end of the Earth Week celebrations on Apr. 26.

Activities include tours of the 37-hectare Nature Reserve, where foreign ambassadors will participate in tree planting at 11 a.m. at the Global Peace Garden.

Dita Sandico Ong will present a fashion show featuring hand woven, native fibers and indigenous materials. Earthaven, in the rolling hills of San Mateo, Rizal, has waterfalls, gardens and nature paths. It has picturesque huts for overnight stay. Larger grass-roofed buildings can accommodate groups. Hanging bridges challenge the adventurous.

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EARTHAVEN features seven healing gardens: vegetable, herb, flower, cactus, fruit, salad and the spirulina fountain in the middle

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basketball addict

Paolo Trillo

music addict

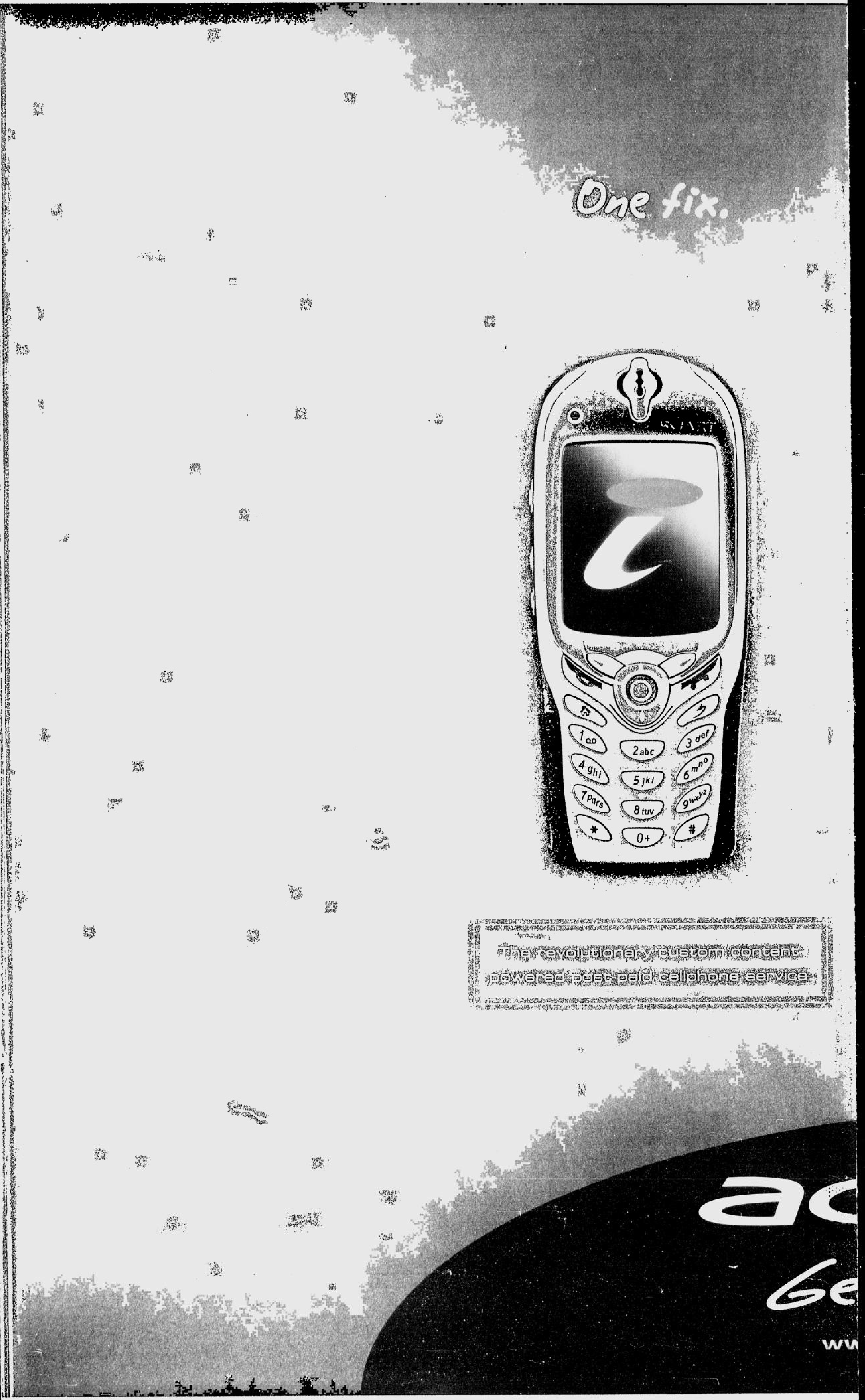
Derek Ramsay

car addict

Katrina Tantoco

shopping addict

GREGGY
gadget addict
MIMI
tennis addict
TESSA
make-up addict
DOM
party addict
KONRAD
computer addict
MIKEY
audio addict
PIA
diving addict
WOWIE
fitness addict
MELISSA
food addict
SHY
video addict
MON
sports addict
PIA
love addict
GIRLIE
gym addict
VAN
fashion addict
JEC
movie addict
Open to find your addiction.



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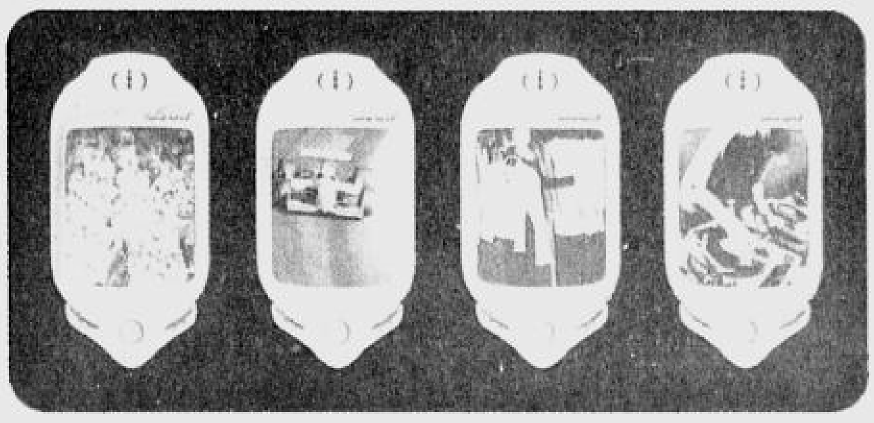

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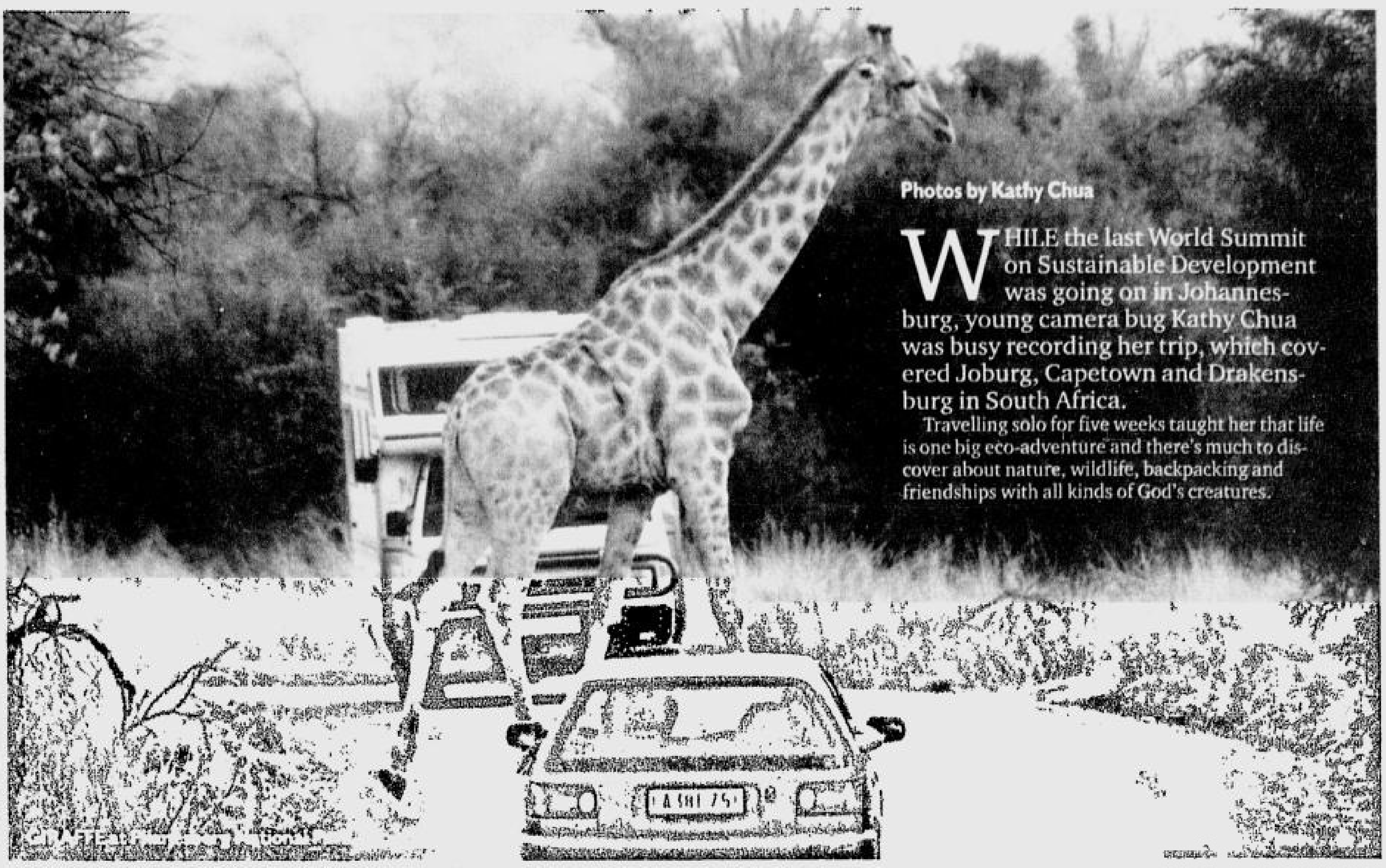
OUT OF SOUTH AFRICA

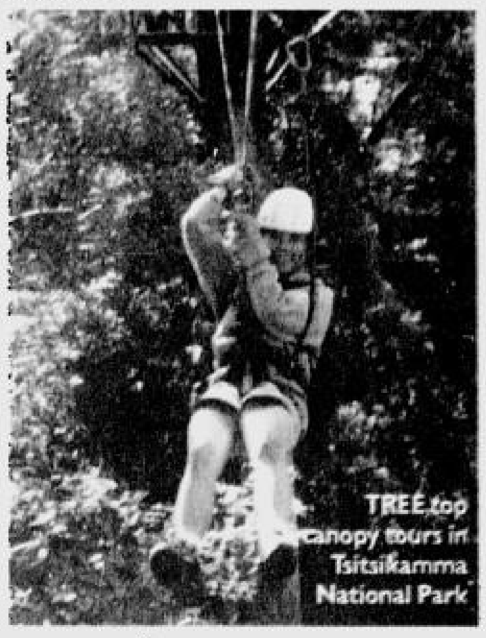

GIRAFFES [illegible]

Photos by Kathy Chua

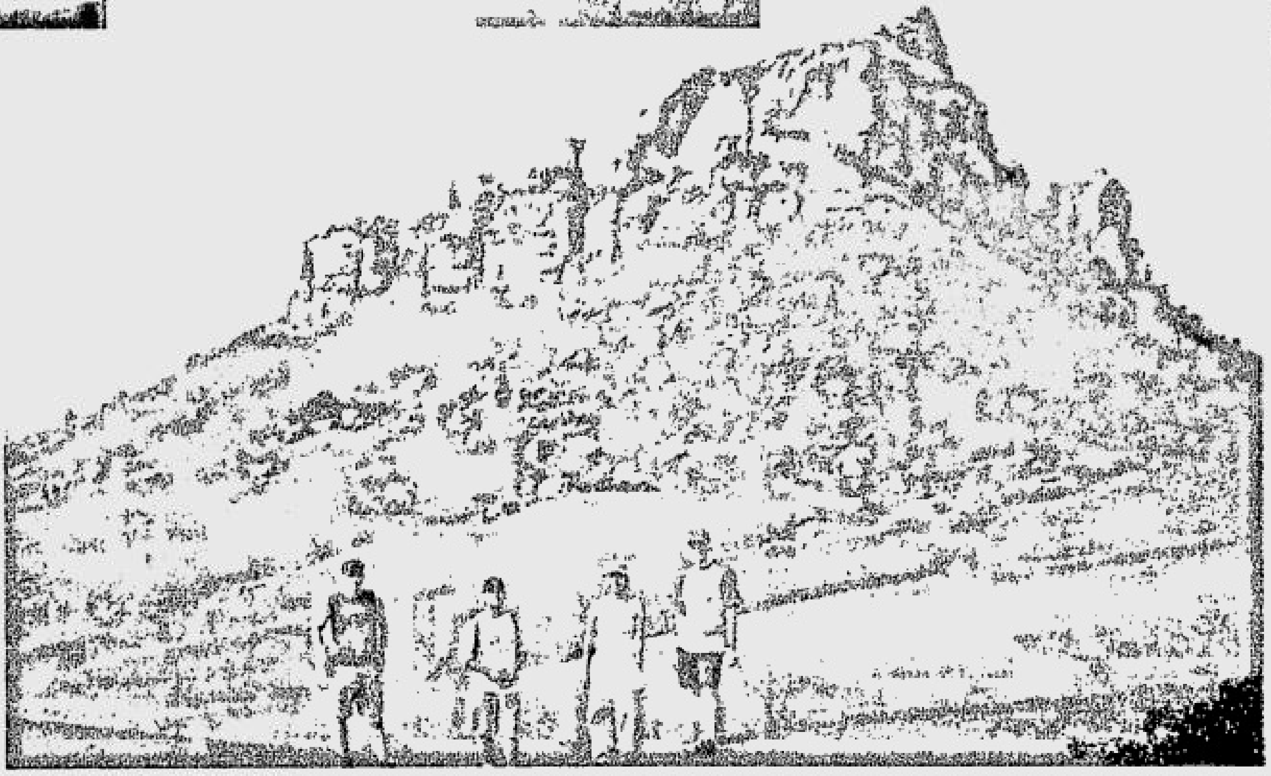
WHILE the last World Summit on Sustainable Development was going on in Johannesburg, young camera bug Kathy Chua was busy recording her trip, which covered Joburg, Capetown and Drakensburg in South Africa.

Travelling solo for five weeks taught her that life is one big eco-adventure and there's much to discover about nature, wildlife, backpacking and friendships with all kinds of God's creatures.

KATHY feeds Impi (Zulu for "warrior"), the lion cub


TREEtop canopy tours in Tsitsikamma National Park

HORSEBACK riding in the Tsitsikamma National Park


KATHY and fellow backpackers in North Drakensberg. This area is one of the places that inspired Tolkien to write "Lord of the Rings."

Trio offers converter for biodegradable waste

Text by Linda B. Bolido
Photos by Joan Bondoc

THE RAPID Bio-Waste Converter transforms biodegradable waste into dry and odorless dust and pellets.

THREE friends believe they may have the solution to the problem of disposing tons of biodegradable—*nabubulok*—waste, that make up the bulk of the trash generated primarily by households.

Luis Cervantes, Luis Vizcocho and Mariano Sason have come up with the Rapid Bio-Waste Converter, a machine that looks like a bigger version of winnowing equipment one sees dotting the countryside at harvest time. What the machine does is convert organic waste into dry and odorless dust and pellets instantly. The resulting dust and pellets can then be spread over soil to prepare it for planting or aged for a few days to be used as fertilizer. Either way it can be put on the ground immediately as it will no longer rot or produce a stench.

Down the toilet

That may be a better solution than flushing biodegradable waste down the toilet as Bayani Fernando, concurrent chair of the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) and public works and highways secretary, reportedly suggested. Considering that statistics gathered by international organizations indicate that less than half of Filipinos have sanitary toilets (and even fewer have the flush type) and considering further that most local toilets overflow even when only bathroom tissue is flushed, the suggestion would likely just create another problem.

LUIS Vizcocho, Luis Cervantes and Mariano Sason, the triumvirate behind the waste converter, show what comes out of their machine.

A new machine may eliminate the need to transport the bulk of 'nabubulok' garbage for dumping in a landfill

Produced and marketed by Agreptek Corporation in Lucena City (tel. 042-7103668; fax 042-7106660; e-mail agreptek2002@yahoo.com), the machine could convert waste at the rate of 1,200 kilos per hour, according to Vizcocho, owner of the company which also makes equipment for the processing of coconut fiber. One machine could convert waste generated by 14,000 households on a daily basis. Vizcocho said Metro Manila, which according to estimates generated about 6,000 tons of garbage everyday, would need 150-200 units. That might mean two or three barangays sharing one unit, which is small enough to fit in vacant spaces in urban areas.

The P2.25 million machine operates on both diesel fuel and electricity. It requires 45 liters of diesel fuel for eight hours, Cervantes, identified as the inventor (and Sason the fabricator), said. The same number of hours would cost about P240 in electricity at current rates.

Vizcocho said maintenance was easy as most of the spare parts were available locally. Only the engine was imported. He added that the company would train buyers in service and maintenance before handing over the equipment, which could be made in 70 days.

Use of enzymes

Processing of biodegradable waste in the machine involves the use of Bio-5 Enzymes developed by Cervantes. Derived mainly from banana, the botanical preparation is sprayed into the waste before loading into the machine. Aside from removing the odor from the machine's output, the enzymes continue working, converting the resulting dust and pellets into fertilizer after five days or so.

The liquid removed from processed waste, leachate, can also be collected and used as organic fertilizer. It will pose less hazard even if it gets into water sources.

The machine appears to have one immediate and practical advantage—waste, or at least the bulk of it, does not have to be trucked across the metropolis or Luzon for that matter, eliminating the need to pay haulers millions of pesos. Besides, finding landfills for Metro Manila's garbage is proving to be almost as difficult as the search for the Holy Grail. Residents in areas chosen to host Metro Manila's trash are vehemently opposing the "honor," threatening mass action if necessary.

Managing biodegradable waste, because of sheer volume and because it rots and stinks, is the bigger headache in urban garbage management. Cans, recyclable paper, plastic and other reusable materials, if separated from the *nabubulok*, can be converted into cash as there are ready markets for them. As for waste from hospitals, old batteries and others that should not be left scattered about since they could prove risky to health, local technology already exists for shredding and detoxifying then converting them into hollow blocks. Others may be mixed with asphalt and concrete for road-building.

Adding Agreptek's new machine to the existing tools and ways for dealing with garbage might be better than getting the imported, costly and, according to environmental groups, ecologically hazardous incinerator.

But so far, only the local government of Mauban, Quezon had shown willingness to give the local invention the benefit of the doubt, although the machine had yet to see action as the town's officials were reportedly still trying to find a suitable location for it. The MMDA had not responded at all although Vizcocho said they had already sent four compact discs—two to Fernando himself—demonstrating the merits of their machine.

Hopefully, the discs have not been flushed in the toilet like other garbage and the MMDA will find time to check out if the new machine is well worth exploring.

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